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*Mr. Lewis had a book in his hand into which he frequently looked, and then raised  
his eyes again to gaze upon the prospect that surrounded him.*

*Page 163*

*Published by the Religious Tract & Book Society for Ireland.*



TALES  
AND  
ILLUSTRATIONS,

CHIEFLY INTENDED  
FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

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BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

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SECOND EDITION.

VOL. II.

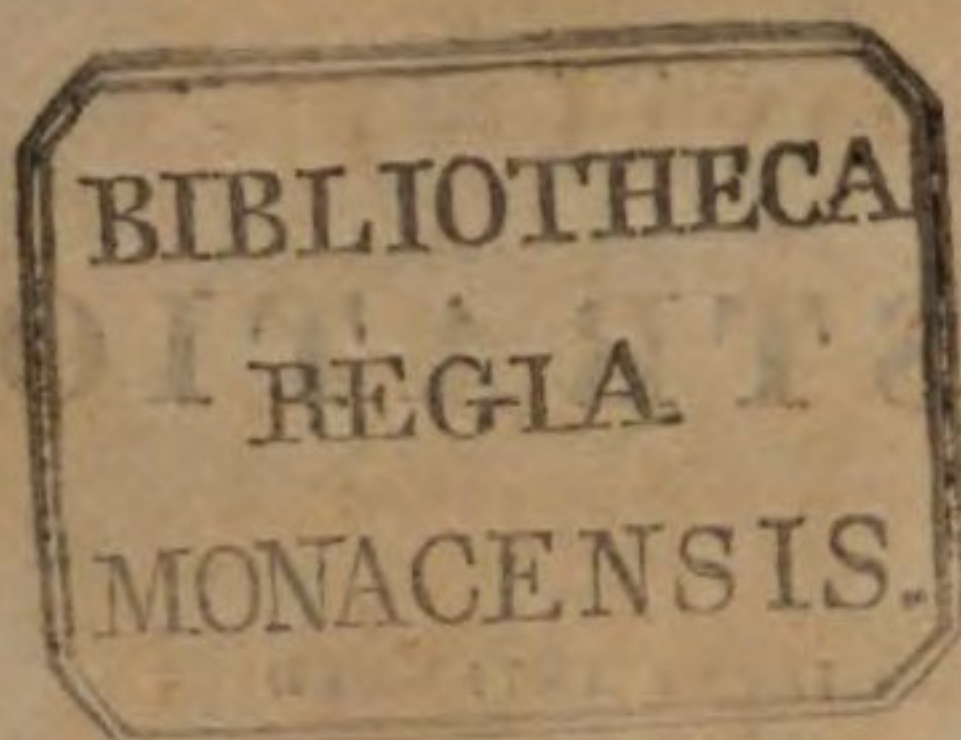
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# JOSEPH ;

OR,

## HUMILITY BEFORE HONOUR.

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THERE are few narratives contained in the Holy Scriptures, that take so strong a hold on the warm and simple affections of childhood—retaining the same powerful ascendancy over the matured mind, even to the termination of life's journey—as the history of Joseph. How often is the infant eye filled with tears, while imagination pictures “the lad,” cast into the deep pit by his cruel brethren, and again drawn from thence, to be sold to a travelling band of strangers ! How does the touching pathos of that unadorned story thrill through the little heart, when



the "coat of many colours," stained with blood, is brought before the trembling father, with the abrupt and rude communication, "This have we found ; know thou whether it be thy son's coat or no !" What anxious expectation throbs in the young bosom, when after tracing the outlines of the story, and beholding Joseph established as chief subject in the realm of Pharaoh, it sees, at length, the guilty brethren given into the hand of their injured victim, bowing down before him, and unconsciously fulfilling the very dreams that had so excited their impious and malevolent feelings ! Led rapidly along, to and fro, between Egypt and Canaan, by what is, perhaps, the most vivid description ever traced by the hand of man, even under divine inspiration, the expected meeting is brought about, and Benjamin stands before his mother's son. One more severe trial of the ten brethren, to see whether their ancient enmity against Joseph survives towards young Benjamin ; and, at last, all disguise is cast aside and the almost infantine simplicity of the expressions makes its way at once to the feel-



ings of childhood, communicating a sensation of relief and delight when Joseph has revealed himself; “And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.”

The writer of these remarks can well recal to mind, how, at the age of six or seven years, she has dwelt upon this fascinating story, till, like Joseph, unable to restrain the burst of sensibility, she has sought where to weep, and has entered into her chamber, and wept there: and now, after the long lapse of many painful years, she does the same: with a feeling of delight so much the more exquisite, as she better comprehends the value of this jewel. Its brilliancy alone first caught her view; nor is the exterior charm of that brilliancy in the least abated, by a fuller acquaintance with its intrinsic worth.

The history of Joseph is frequently brought before the view of children, both as it stands in the sacred volume, and in more condensed forms, accompanied by remarks, that, how-



ever just and instructive as far as they go, yet are too commonly defective in the most important point : the character of Joseph is highly extolled, and, very properly, held out as a beautiful model for imitation : it is represented as a fine illustration of many preceptive parts of the Holy Scriptures, which set forth the sure triumph of truth and uprightness over falsehood and craft ; which enforce the forgiveness of injury, and the practice of patience, meekness, temperance, chastity, fraternal and filial love, and a continual reverential sense of the divine presence. To omit such practical applications of the narrative would be exceedingly wrong ; but an undue exaltation is sometimes given to the personal character of Joseph, by overlooking the striking fact of his being the most eminent type of Christ displayed in those Scriptures, whose office it is to testify of Him in whom all their shadows are fulfilled.

As a specimen of simple sublimity and deep pathos, the Old Testament contains no narrative to equal this story of Joseph : as a moral, instructive lesson, the proudest com-



positions of man shrink into nothingness beside it: but its brightest glory is, that it exhibits more of the Gospel, and of him who is the Author and subject of that Gospel, than can be found comprised in an equal space throughout the entire books of Moses and the Prophets. It is an apple of gold, whose kernels are diamonds; and they who look no deeper than the surface, must remain ignorant of the treasures which it encloses.

In how wonderful a manner is the absolute sovereignty of the Most High here displayed! We find him permitting evil minds to pursue their own devices, and to fulfil the worst suggestions of malicious hatred, as if to show how triumphantly His work can proceed, by means of the very opposition so impiously raised against it. In the dreams of Joseph, an intimation is given of future ascendancy over his family, which arouses all the passions of envy and pride in the carnal hearts of his brethren: they set themselves to make void the decrees of Omnipotence, and will commit the crime of fratricide rather than fail of their object. When dissuaded from imbruing



their hands in his blood, they cast him into a pit, where nine out of the ten intended that he should perish from want; and no feeling of compunction, no relentings towards their unoffending victim, arise to change this cruel purpose. Covetousness holds out to their view the wages of iniquity: and they doom him to a merciless slavery in a strange land, that avarice may be sated, while revenge enjoys the purposed gratification. Why do a company of Ishmaelites pass by at this critical juncture, and become parties to such unnatural traffic? Because God had said to Abraham, "Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them." It is beautiful, it is glorious, to trace the silent, steady, majestic, uninterrupted course of events, while the Lord takes up the puny weapons of His rebellious worms, and wields them as instruments to further His immutable decrees. The seed of Abraham must sojourn in a strange land, and thither the fore-runner is sent to prepare their place, by means of their murderous enmity against him. Out of Egypt



God will call his Son ; and the infant Jesus is driven there by the bloody persecution of Herod, seeking His life. The blessing was reserved for Jacob, in preference to Esau, the first-born ; but, not content to wait the Lord's time and means of bestowing it, Jacob most wickedly concurred in the fraudulent plan of his mother ; and, by a base deception, crowned with hypocrisy and a direct lie, he was permitted to acquire it in his own way : now mark how the very act by which the desired prediction receives the beginning of its accomplishment, comes fraught with anguish unspeakable to the soul of Jacob, through a deceitful deed on the part of his sons, most strikingly calculated to call to mind his former sin against his blind and aged father. That Jacob suspected some treachery towards Joseph is evident from the tenor of his remarks, when required to send Benjamin also into Egypt. We are continually reminded of Ezekiel's vision, representative of the Almighty's providential government, where a wheel in the middle of a wheel pursuing an undeviating course, and turning not where



they went, most beautifully expressed the straight, yet complicated, mysterious, yet unembarrassed movements of the vast machinery, by which He, who is wonderful in counsel, and mighty in operation, wills to work out His unsearchable designs. It is like a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout, yet how many thousand delicate threads are arranged and combined to form its unbroken texture !

Joseph is an instructive instance of a believer, setting the Lord always before him, and walking humbly with his God : but, from the manner in which this is sometimes dwelt upon, there is danger of the inference being drawn, that *therefore* he was so abundantly blessed and favoured. But observe how emphatically, how continually his prosperity is resolved into the Lord's abiding presence with him : he was evidently chosen in the furnace of affliction, a type of Him who was " a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ;" and, like him, deeply abased previous to a distinguished exaltation ; but Joseph received all that he had of the fulness of Christ,



and his language could be no other than that of the apostle Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am." If Joseph found favour in the sight of Potiphar, it was because "the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man;" "And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." "The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field." We may understand of this passage, not that the meritoriousness of Joseph purchased a blessing on the Egyptian, but that it was in furtherance of the Lord's gracious purposes towards him that this favour was shown; for the knowledge acquired by Joseph in Potiphar's house, and the management entrusted to him there, must have contributed materially to qualify him for the far higher and more responsible station which he afterwards filled under Pharaoh. The grace of God was, indeed, sufficient to supply all his need in every situation; but means are generally appointed to prepare those whom



the Lord designs to exalt, both by the operations of the Holy Spirit within, and the providential concurrence of suitable circumstances from without.

The Lord being thus with Joseph, he was able to appropriate that saying, "We love Him, because he first loved us;" and most precious, indeed, were the fruits that faith, working by love, produced in the heart and life of the young Israelite. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Surely the Lord was indeed with him, and in him, who could thus repel a powerful temptation and triumph over it, not on one occasion merely, or by a temporary submission to the restraining power of divine grace, but "day by day," with a firm, calm, and constant opposition, setting his face as a rock against sin, pleading forcibly the moral turpitude of the crime to which he was enticed, and the aggravations that it must carry, from the stain of base ingratitude towards an earthly benefactor, as well as flagrant injustice to a fellow-man; but the impregnable bulwark of his virtue was, that, like Moses,



he “endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.” “By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones”—by the same faith that cheered his dying hour, in old age, with the sure prospect of glory and felicity to his posterity, was his youth preserved unspotted from the taint which the tempter would have fixed upon it, and his soul kept in patient submission, when cast from his honourable station, and thrown into a dungeon. This scene of suffering for righteousness’ sake again most vividly brings before our view the great Antitype of the story. “He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief.” “Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,” the Saviour of the world received the bitter cup, and patiently drank the dreadful contents—so with Joseph in his public character. Righteousness, not guilt, drew down upon him this heavy stroke from the misjudging hand of man: but let us beware, lest, in the love and



compassion which it is impossible to avoid feeling towards Joseph, we lose sight of the awful fact, that, as a son of Adam, he also was corrupt, gone astray, and become abominable : that, in the sight of a holy, heart-searching God, he was meet for eternal wrath, and possessed no claim that should hinder his mouth from being stopped, and himself standing as a guilty, condemned criminal at the bar of divine justice. The consciousness of integrity and well-doing, in the particular instance for which he suffered, must have tended greatly to support his mind under the injustice and cruelty of man ; while a sense of his vileness in the sight of God would, by divine grace, enable him to humble himself under that mighty hand which was to exalt him in due time. It cannot be supposed that Joseph had forgotten the former intimations of the Lord's purpose respecting him ; and, gifted as he was with strong faith, he would confidently expect a happy issue out of present affliction. Yet how active a principle was this faith ! he did not wait in indolent expectation of promised



mercies, but most diligently employed, in the service of his fellow-creatures, even the moments that were darkened by the gloom of a prison. We may well rest for a while in contemplation of this beautiful character, in the depth of abasement and accumulation of sorrow.

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” It is a grievous thing to be left destitute of outward comfort; and far more so to experience that spiritual desertion which Isaiah thus describes: but even this sorrow has been carried for us by our compassionate Redeemer; and His cry of anguish, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” is full of consolation to us. While we are yet enabled to hold fast our integrity, there is no circumstance in which the Christian may not glorify God, affording a spectacle to angels, over which they surely rejoice; and very few are the situations where no opportunity is afforded of doing



good likewise to the souls of others. Joseph was “steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ;” and so plentiful is the harvest, so few the labourers, that every one may find a task to his hand, if his heart prompt him to execute it. We cannot but suppose that Satan was terribly active in seeking the destruction of Joseph ; and that his diabolical instigations had prompted the ten brethren and the wife of Potiphar to such daring extremity of crime ; but, in the midst of all distresses, persecutions, afflictions, it was still the blessed privilege of Joseph to let his light shine before men, maintaining, by the consistent holiness of his life, an effectual warfare against the powers of evil. God’s servants may be reduced to bondage, but the Spirit of God cannot be bound : He can impart a happy liberty to those among whom he dwells, and make them “free indeed”—free to glorify Him who turns the shadow of night into morning, and draws nearest to the souls of his people, when all mortal help is farthest removed. The light which God has kindled, no man can extin-



guish ; and the darker the spot where it is maliciously pent up by his enemies, the more vividly does its brilliancy appear. Unless men were sometimes permitted to go great lengths in persecuting the Christian, and assailing his character, how could he make proof either of his own faith, or of the power and love of his Almighty Deliverer? “Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall ; but the Lord was my help.”

In Potiphar's house all had prospered for Joseph's sake ; “And he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand,” because the Lord was evidently with him. But now Joseph is cast into prison on a most disgraceful charge, overwhelmed with reproach, and, as the Psalmist informs us, treated with great severity. How does he fare under this reverse of fortune? Why, man had forsaken him, “But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper, of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison ; and whatsoever they



did there, he was the doer of it. And the keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper." Potiphar, the keeper of the prison, and Pharaoh himself were alike idolaters, utterly ignorant of the true God, and despising those who differed from their heathenish doctrines and practices : how comes it, then, that the Lord being with Joseph obtained for him such favour in their eyes ? It was the fruit that won their regard : of the root they knew nothing. Joseph exhibited a combination of qualities most estimable in the sight of all men, and whatever he did was sure to prosper. The Egyptians, therefore, looked on him as a lucky, as well as a wise person ; and, though they had surely esteemed him more highly had he acknowledged as his god a river or a reptile, yet they had prudence sufficient to avail themselves of his extraordinary gifts, though scorning the source from whence they were derived. It is very observable how Moses, writing as he was moved by the Holy Ghost,



repeats and reiterates the reference of all Joseph's good conduct and prosperity to the favour and presence of the Lord, thus guarding against any undue exaltation of a remarkably shining character, by continually pointing to the origin of that borrowed lustre which it reflects. This was the more needful, as marking the immeasurable distance between the type and antitype. The righteousness, the glory of Jesus Christ, are all his own: those of Joseph, on the contrary, in no manner originating with himself. In one were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, as a stream is hid in its fountain: the other had a portion of those treasures in an earthen vessel, and the excellency of the power was all of God. Joseph was "of the earth, earthy;" yet was that soil so blessed, that the good seed sown therein sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold; as we shall have abundant cause to remark while we proceed.

The tenderness of Joseph's character constantly unfolds itself, displaying the mind which was also in Christ Jesus, the mind full



of compassionate participation in the sorrows of others. Of this we have an instance in his attentive kindness to the servants of Pharaoh, which induced him to remark the sadness of their countenances, and to enquire into the cause. This, followed by the interpretation of the dreams, which his sympathy won them to communicate, led to his subsequent exaltation. "Love, gentleness, kindness," are among the fruits of the Spirit, and the character in which they do not develop themselves affords but doubtful evidence of its actual sanctification. "Be pitiful, be courteous"—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep," are among the impressive injunctions of the apostle; and, in tracing the outlines of Joseph's history, it is profitable to mark how the Lord renders those commendable things instrumental to his prosperity, which we must not look on as the procuring cause of it, seeing that all is of grace. From the house of Potiphar to the palace of Pharaoh, would appear a more easy transition, than from the dungeon of a criminal; but the Lord so ordered it,



that the latter fell out in a way exceedingly to magnify the riches of His manifold gifts in his faithful servant. Perhaps, when so highly distinguished in the household of Potiphar, Joseph might consider himself in the fair road to preferment, according to his supernatural dreams, and take some credit for the good conduct which recommended him in his office ; but boasting must be excluded—where the Lord designs extraordinary favours, the object must first be stripped of all self-righteousness and self-dependence. Joseph sunk deep, when sold as a bond-slave, first to the Midianites, then to the captain of the guard : from this depth he arose to a station of greater consequence and honour than he had enjoyed in his own country and his father's house ; but, to fit him for a much higher advancement, he must be deprived of all that he had lately acquired, and lose his freedom under far more galling circumstances. He must wear, not the badge of a slave, but the fetters of a felon—must be robbed, not merely of his liberty, but of his good name also. Here again observe the striking similitude in



his typical character. Every exaltation of our glorious Redeemer was preceded by a low abasement ; but, when He was to be received into heaven itself, in the brightness of everlasting triumph, and there to reign till He hath put all enemies under his feet, he must first undergo the extremity of humiliation ; He must stand at the bar of an unjust judge, be condemned on the contradictory evidence of false witnesses, satisfy the savage cruelty of a blood-thirsty multitude with his sufferings, endure an agonizing death, numbered with flagrant malefactors, and be enshrouded in the dungeon of the tomb. Let not the follower of the Lamb murmur, though he should be brought into waters as deep as David describes, though, like Jonah, he may be able to say, “ The waters compassed me about even to the soul : the depths closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head : ” though, with Joseph, he be condemned innocent, and exposed to all worldly loss, and unmerited ignominy—nay, though he be even sentenced to a shameful death, and devoted to an untimely



tomb—it is the cup that the Lord has seen good to mingle for His most approved servants, his chosen, whom he has loved with an everlasting love, his own beloved and only Son, in whom he is well pleased. There lurks not one bitter drop more than is needful to render the cup wholesome ; nor does the furnace burn even one degree beyond the measured heat, that will suffice to purge away the dross.

The severity of affliction may be enhanced by its protracted duration. Joseph had good cause to expect that his modest and reasonable request to the chief butler would be attended to, and his case equitably inquired into ; but two long years passed away, and still was Joseph an inmate of the prison. Here is the patience and faith of the saints ; they must learn that lesson concerning God's promise, “ Though it tarry, wait for it ; it will surely come ; it will not tarry.” Probably Joseph had laid out, with some confidence, a scheme of prosperity speedily renewed, through the instrumentality of the chief butler : it was natural that he should do



so, since the Lord had signally favoured him with the interpretation of this man's dream ; but it is usual with the Most High to humble his children, by not sending them relief according to their own expectations. Something, either in the season, or the circumstances, or the intermediate means, will yet repeat that assurance, " My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." He will teach us to know, not only that the gift is free, but that every concurrent circumstance is ordered, and the whole arranged by his sovereign and mysterious will. We are bound to expect great mercies in Christ Jesus ; but the when, the where, and the how, we must leave to Him who giveth no account of any of his matters.

Felix left Paul bound, after giving him sufficient encouragement to believe that he was well assured of the apostle's innocence—otherwise he would scarcely have attended on his teaching : disappointed in his covetous expectation of a bribe from his prisoner, he was " willing to shew the Jews a pleasure" which cost him nothing, and Paul remained



at the disposal of his successor ; because Paul was appointed to bear his awful testimony before King Agrippa, and to leave the almost Christian without excuse. We do not know for what purpose Joseph was permitted to continue in captivity so long, neither does it concern us to know. The duration of our afflictions is ordered by infinite wisdom and love ; and, when the rod has done its work, it is withdrawn. Pharaoh's dream brought to the chief butler's remembrance his own sin of ingratitude, which, it is probable, would have given him little trouble, but for this opportunity of gratifying his royal master, by introducing one whose wisdom promised a solution of his difficulties. Broken reeds, indeed, do we lean upon, when putting our trust in princes, or in any child of man ; but relying on Him in whose hands are all hearts, we may rest assured they shall be turned and disposed to become the medium of whatever good He wills to bestow through them. Joseph, perhaps, had despaired of the chief butler's interposition, before God saw fit to make use of it. Our sanguine anticipations of im-



mediate relief from any quarter whence it will ultimately come, may retard its approach, to humble our over-confidence. This, at least, is the experience of the writer, who has abundant cause to bless the Lord that his mercies have been vouchsafed in his own time and way, and often in direct opposition to those of the suppliant.

The season was at length come, which should prove that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise:" his servant should rise with a rapidity as surprising as his probation had been long and severe. He had been fulfilling a truly ministerial office, himself a prisoner, giving comfort and hope to those who were pent in prison likewise. Like the believer confined in the dungeon of this world, he could not but groan over his captivity, and turn many a longing look to the sure promises that yet remained to be fulfilled to him; but, at the same time, he felt the value of superior privileges vouchsafed, and employed them to the advantage of those under his inspection. No doubt he was diligent and zealous in making known the God



whom he served; we may be assured of it, not only as it was an indispensable fruit and evidence of the grace that was in him, but also because he prefaced the interpretation of the dreams related to him by Pharaoh's servants with a reference to the power of Jehovah, which plainly seems to argue a habitual mention of Him; and when brought into the presence of the Egyptian monarch himself, how very constantly and emphatically does he refer all to his God! "God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." "God hath shewed Pharaoh what He is about to do." "The thing is established by God; and God will shortly bring it to pass." Till the idolatrous king himself caught the phra-seology, and asked, "Can we find such an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"

We know that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." To this use we must apply it, and reverently receive it as the revealed will of the Most High: but, in



due subordination to these its most important offices, we may be permitted to dwell with admiring delight on the exquisite beauties of the diction in which this sacred mission is clad. There is a gracefulness, a propriety, a lofty sublimity, in its most brief and simple narratives, that the highest powers of man, unassisted man, can never attain to. The address of the apostle Paul to Agrippa, in the 26th chapter of the Acts, is justly celebrated as a model of oratory ; and surely in the speech of Joseph to Pharaoh, there is very much to excite similar admiration. The dutious respect, so becoming before a monarch or chief ruler—for the powers that be are ordained of God—yet so totally free from the least appearance of flattering servility, the conscious dignity of the speaker, a poor bond-slave brought from a prison to declare the message of the Most High, and the unasked counsel so frankly, so firmly, so judiciously given, all mark this passage as extraordinary among many wonders. In this we see “a mouth and wisdom” given, long ere the promise was expressly made. In this we



behold an illustration of the unanswerable question, "Who teacheth like Him?"

We cannot marvel at the effect produced on Pharaoh by this animated address, nor at his consequent decision. Joseph could hardly anticipate, when called into the king's presence as the interpreter of his servant's dreams, that he should leave it the second man in the kingdom. Here the Lord wrought with a rapidity defying all calculation, and doing more than he could ask or think. Had Joseph been left to rise at court by the usual gradations, supposing he might have been preferred from Potiphar's house to some part of Pharaoh's establishment, he could scarcely have gained the threshold of such an advancement in thrice the time, while he would have been surrounded by all the fatal blandishments of such a perilous residence, and might, perhaps, have pierced himself through with many sorrows by some sinful compliance. But, blessed be God! he snatched his servant from temptation, after he had nobly repulsed the first onset, hid him in a dungeon, and thence drew him forth, like a pure stone from



the mine, to adorn a kingly crown. How humbling, how sanctifying, must such a review have been to the pious spirit of Joseph ! how rich a theme now for the triumphant songs of that glorified spirit before the throne of the Lamb ! and shall not we also offer up an ejaculation of adoring acknowledgment to the God of Joseph, who, “ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” claims our praise for every act of grace, every manifestation of glory, recorded in His sacred word. There is not a circumstance the most minute, noticed in this lovely story, but would furnish a theme for amplification almost inexhaustible : and it is difficult to pass over a single paragraph.

The confidence of Pharaoh in the Hebrew prisoner was not misplaced ; the extraordinary wisdom and prudence with which Joseph availed himself of the years of plenty to make the provisions for the approaching famine, fully justified the king’s implicit faith. We find, “ When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread : and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, go



unto Joseph ; what he saith to you, do." Here, again, is a splendid view of the divine antitype breaking in upon us. All power is given unto Him in heaven and earth : and the voice of the invisible God proclaims, "This is my beloved Son : hear ye HIM." Vainly do we approach the presence of our Maker, and offer up petitions to his throne—to us it must prove, not a mercy-seat, but a furnace of consuming wrath, if the blood of sprinkling be not carried with us : our prayers and ourselves will be alike rejected as an abomination, and our hopes become an eternal mockery, if any name but that of Christ be in our plea. God hath "highly exalted Him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,"—"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." He, "of God, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"—"In him



dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And He it is who has received gifts for men, which, except at his hand, they never can receive. How important then is it to bear in mind, that not the mere closing of our prayers with the name of that exalted Saviour, in a lifeless formality, will avail us, but an abiding consciousness that God hath set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, and gives to his sceptre an unlimited sovereignty over the souls that he ransomed from destruction; and over those also who imagine a vain thing, taking counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed. Happy are they, who, being taught of the Father, go to Christ; and what he saith unto them do. He is the dispenser of every providential, no less than the source of every spiritual mercy: and he stands more ready to give than we to ask.

But we must now behold the approaching fulfilment of those dreaded predictions, which had armed the sons of Jacob against their brother's life. The Lord often secretly puts the question to us, which Paul asks of his



flock at Corinth, "What will ye, shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love?" If we set ourselves to oppose His work, and make void his word, the consequence will be that which is described in the 2d Psalm. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." Jacob's sinful method of obtaining the blessing, did not make void the privileges and promises which it included; but with how much bitterness did it mingle them! His sons wickedly conspired to overthrow the counsel of God; and therefore were they constrained to undergo a series of humiliating and terrifying perplexities, that it is not easy to conceive rightly of, unless we pondered much more upon the subject, than in this slight sketch would be practicable. In that grand feature of the believer's character, expressed in the injunctions, "Love your enemies," "Do good to them that hate you," "Overcome evil with good," how brightly does the conduct of Joseph realize the most sublime



conceptions that we can form ! It does not appear that in any one instance of his seeming harshness to his guilty brothers, he was actuated by the smallest mixture of resentment, much less of revenge, to try them so severely. The exceeding atrocity of their former conduct to himself, rendered it a matter of justice towards the prince whom he served, and the country over which he presided, to ascertain that some favourable change had taken place in their characters, previous to his introducing them among the inhabitants of the land. The absence of Benjamin might well excite misgivings in his mind, since the youth would but too probably inherit the consequences of that envious dislike, to which Joseph himself was supposed to have fallen a victim.

It appears most consistent with his general temper and conduct, to refer all his subsequent proceedings to the same motive—namely, an anxious desire to ascertain how the ten stood affected towards Benjamin ; and nothing could be more immediately conducive to this discovery, than the otherwise



inexplicable device of hiding the cup in the sack's mouth. Here was a fair and plausible pretext for delivering up young Benjamin, as a convicted criminal, to a worse fate than Joseph's had appeared, if they were so inclined; and how great must have been his satisfaction at the noble and disinterested self-devotion of Judah; who, on this occasion, gloriously typifies the Lion of his tribe,\* the Lamb that was slain for sinners, while surrendering himself, so far innocent, in place of one who was apparently convicted of guilt. This circumstance put an end to all scruple, all disguise on the part of Joseph; and the tears that he gave vent to, must have been those of unmingled joy.

And it is of importance to regard, in this place, the resemblance of Joseph's plan to the dealings of Jesus Christ, in pardoning and receiving sinners—even those who, while bearing the name of his brethren, and outwardly assuming the character of His people, calling themselves Christians, and attending on the

\* Rev. v. 5.



appointed ordinances of His house, have yet basely and profanely sold him, as it were, into the hands of his enemies, by bartering the blessings of his spiritual kingdom, for such vile payment as the world, the flesh, and the devil can tempt them with. There is many a Judas, among professed Christians, who, were the Lord now on earth, would sell him for as mean a profit as the original traitor did. We are justified in believing this ; seeing at how much smaller a price they value their immortal souls ; and how readily they yield themselves servants to sin, for the most momentary, the most trivial and contemptible gratification that Satan can present to their view. Let conscience but speak, and it will testify, that such has been the character of all who are called from darkness to light ; and, in most instances, these may trace a resemblance between their spiritual conflicts, and the troubles of the ten brethren at this period of the history. A famine, the cravings of a hunger that no means within their reach could satisfy, usually sends them as suppliants to Him who alone can supply



all their need ; and, whether the voice come from without or within, whether from the word preached, or from the internal work of the Spirit, in bringing to remembrance things forgotten or disregarded, still that intolerable craving must be experimentally felt, ere they obey the counsel—"There is corn in Egypt : get you down thither, and buy for us from thence ; that we may live, and not die."

If He to whom the application is at length made, appear for a time to speak roughly and to look strangely, still do his bowels yearn upon his brethren ; and though, working mysteriously, He hides himself in the thick darkness, yet is he preparing to make good the gracious invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat : yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Sinners are too often found going with a price in their hand, to Him who will give freely for his own glory : but this passage represents to us, in a lively manner, how little need the Lord has of our services,



and how above all price are the blessings he bestows. He looks for obedience and a willing heart: he demands that we be fruitful in good works, assuring us, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit:" but he will find means to humble us under a sense of the utter nothingness of the best we can offer in his sight, when regarded as a means of procuring his favour. The very mention of "good works" is startling to some pious Christians, as though the grand fundamental doctrine of justification by faith alone were in danger of being subverted; but, surely, when we dwell on the excellency of a tree in bearing a rich and plenteous crop of fruit, we are not to be considered as undervaluing the root, which we do not see, but which we thereby know to be sound and vigorous. Nor, while insisting on this plentiful product, as a test of the tree's worth, do we assume that the plant is nourished by its blossoms, instead of its sap. When we meet, throughout the New Testament, with injunctions to personal holiness even stronger than those contained in the covenant of works,



what inference can we draw, but that we are expected and commanded in every deed to be “perfect in every good work,” through the assisting grace of God? Although this perfection can be but comparative, since unblemished holiness can never be attained to by fallen man, while in this body, still it is certain as eternal truth can make it, that “Faith without works is dead”—a name, not a reality, a notion, not a principle. There is a faith that trembles and despairs: the faith of the Christian is that which “worketh by love,”—by which we have our “fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

Surely Joseph was a working character, we find him incessantly employed. From the period of his diligent observance, when first he brought to his father the evil report of Bilhah’s sons—in the persevering search after his brethren—in Potiphar’s house—in the prison—in the palace—he is ever the laborious, indefatigable worker; and, even here, while meditating the advancement and abundant prosperity of his most criminal foes, how patient, how prudent, how systematic



and forbearing is his conduct, in order to attain the best end, and by the best means ! He spares neither time nor trouble ; neither his own feelings, nor, as far as he sees it needful, those of the penitents whom he yearns to embrace and assure. He is like a skilful physician, deeply searching the malady, and in mercy withholding the lenitive, till it shall come with permanent effect. Believers ! has not such been the Lord's method with you ?

Does it not excite your amazement to retrace all the steps by which He led you to himself, and prepared you to receive the adoption of sons, where you had long displayed the hardened enmity of rebels and murderers ? Can you regard the conduct of Joseph towards his brethren, without a recurrence to the reconciliation effected in you through the blood of the cross ? If you be, indeed, of that number, of whom " Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren," can you forbear joining in the sorrowful confession of the offenders, " We are verily guilty concerning our brother ?" Your hearts must have



frequently uttered this language—a language that He hears, and well understands, when we, perhaps, suspect not that He is nigh; and, if such be still your contrite feelings, although He may not yet have manifested himself to your soul, in the words of peace and assurance, do not therefore despond. His time may not yet have come; but it shall arrive, and bring to you the confirmation of His pardoning mercy and unspeakable love.

In suffering by his brethren, Joseph had also suffered for them: his afflictions were the appointed means of unnumbered blessings to them and to their posterity, though, in persecuting him, they had no other end in view than the gratification of their own malicious wickedness. They hated him wrongfully, and condemned him guiltless; nor could any thing be farther from their wish than to accelerate the advancement which followed his sufferings. They thought not, by casting him into a pit, to exalt him to a throne: neither did the Jewish people, in crucifying the Lord Jesus, suppose that they were instrumental in setting the anointed



King on his holy hill of Zion—that they were effecting what the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God had appointed for the redemption of the world. In both instances the guilt of the agents was most atrocious, and they themselves altogether without excuse; yet how does mercy rejoice against judgment in each! The less, typifying the greater, shews us the most beautiful example of heartfelt forgiveness that, by mere man, ever was displayed. We trace not an allusion to their crime, in the address of Joseph to his brethren, beyond what was necessary to assure them of his identity. Well might they doubt it! Is this,—this, the chief minister of a mighty monarch, possessed of unlimited power and authority, and dealing out the means of existence to thousands, who, but for his aid, must inevitably perish,—is this majestic man, before whom they bow and tremble, the helpless lad whom they cast into the pit, and sold to the Midianitish merchants, whose person they hated, and whose destruction they considered as undoubtedly accomplished? Yes—"I am Joseph, your



brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." Little as a brother's tears were regarded by you, when, in the anguish of his soul, he besought mercy at your hands, a brother's arms are now outspread to embrace you, when, by a word, he could doom you to a far more merciless fate than that which you designed for him. Such might justly have been his reproof; but no such reproof he uttered. Having, unavoidably, thus adverted to their selling him into Egypt, he quickly proceeds—"Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." Who can avoid comparing this passage with Peter's address to the Jewish people? "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"—"Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which you now see and hear." "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as



the Lord our God shall call." These coincidences between the Old and New Testaments are not accidental ; nor are they cited otherwise than for a deeply practical purpose. The first benefit that ensued to the disciples, on the resurrection of our Lord, was, that " then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." " Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

He, " Of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets did write," is represented to us as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the author and finisher of our faith, the sum and substance of all that concerns the salvation of man. The Scriptures are indeed a lamp to our feet ; and Christ is the flame that illumines it, and confers upon it all its worth. How greatly, then, do they err, who, dwelling upon the historical, the legal, or the laudatory portions of the Old Testament, overlook the incessant reference to Him who is the substance of every type, " The end of the law for righteousness," and



the object of all praise! We might be almost led to suppose, from the general view taken of Joseph's story, that it had no purport beyond shewing forth an amiable pattern of forgiving love; but it points far higher than mere morality can rise; and, when we read that Joseph's brethren "were troubled (the margin reads terrified) at his presence," let us consider what will be the terror of those who, by their sins daily concurring to crucify the Lord Jesus afresh, and daringly neglecting so great salvation, must stand in His presence, when "He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him."

Happy are those on whom is now poured forth "the Spirit of grace and of supplication," that, by faith, they may look upon Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, with that "godly sorrow" which "worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of."

How glorious was the victory obtained by Joseph over the enmity of his brethren! heaping, as it were, coals of fire upon their



heads, to melt and purge away the alloy of their evil dispositions against him. What should we think of them, did it appear in the history, that they departed from the presence of their generous benefactor to plan new aggressions against him? Would it not excite our horror and extreme indignation? Yet are there not some, among those who draw near, with the people of God, to receive the unmerited bounties given through a crucified Redeemer, in the appointed ordinances of religion, who, after confessing their sinfulness, and joining in the supplication for pardon and peace, go forth to league with His worst enemy, sin, and to dishonour Him more and more, injuring, as far as in them lies, his cause among others? By so much as “the Lord from heaven” is exalted above mere man, who is “of the earth, earthy,” and by so much as the everlasting love, which passeth knowledge, exceeds the kindly feeling of one creature towards another, even in so great degree is he more guilty who thus makes light of a Saviour’s mercies, and throws off his easy yoke, than the brethren of Jo-



seph could have been, in renewing their conspiracy against him,—after he had thus manifested his tender forgiveness of their past sin.

Dwell, reader, upon the subject, and ask your heart, are you guiltless here? It is a question that you must answer at the judgment-seat: “Judge, therefore, yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord.” Remember that, upon the final judgment, condemnation closely attends, and no way of escape left: it is easy to banish the subject from your thoughts now; but who shall speak of comfort to you when you are banished from God’s presence for ever? Your taste may be gratified, your kindest feelings excited, and the consciousness of approving what is excellent, may spread a soothing complacency over your spirit, while contemplating this engaging history of Joseph in the inspired volume; but recollect that if no more be produced, it is worse than useless to you—it is the savour of death unto death, for it contains that Gospel which none can with impunity neglect.

Participating, as every heart must surely



do, in the joy of the aged Patriarch, who can fail to confess that though "heaviness may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning," to those who commit all to their God? With some indeed that morning dawns not until the dark night of death be past: but often "at evening time it shall be light," and the sun of life after passing its meridian course in clouds and storms, bursts forth in bright tranquillity before the hour of its disappearance from earth. Jacob's pilgrimage, like his character, had been strangely chequered; and an unusual share of affliction had fallen to his lot. We may readily conceive with what poignancy the mysterious fate of his beloved Joseph had dwelt upon his mind, during the absence of Benjamin on this perilous expedition. What then, was his transport on once more beholding the child of his old age, with the ten brethren also, restored to him—and what the effect of that triumphant annunciation delivered with such joyous and abrupt conciseness, "Joseph is yet alive: and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." The old man



could not support that flood of joy—his heart fainted—he believed them not. But, convinced both by their united testimony and the train of carriages prepared to convey him to Egypt, he takes no notice of Joseph's exaltation—the father at that moment alone breaks forth—in a palace or a dungeon it is his child, so long lost, and mourned, that yet survives; and Israel said, “It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.”

All this we can readily believe: natural feeling bears witness to the truth of the description: but how slow are our hard and faithless hearts to credit the condescending assurance of Jehovah, and to invest him with the tenderness which we deny not to belong to the coldest of mankind! Can we read the 15th chapter of St. Luke, that exquisite parable of the prodigal, and realize the picture as actually belonging to ourselves? Do we believe that the King of Glory yearns over His rebellious and apostate children, even as Jacob did towards his absent Joseph—and that the joy in heaven over a repenting sin-



ner exceeds that of Jacob's household, when his lips might so suitably have uttered the gratulation, "This, thy brother, was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found." Thankless, cold, and dead, we scarcely feel when the case is our own, in a matter of incalculable and eternal importance, the emotion that awakened sympathy excites for others, in a case merely of domestic interest.

How do the filial feelings of Joseph shine forth, when, in the midst of his exaltation and splendour, we find him so anxiously, so tenderly providing for the comfort of his aged father! Neither the lapse of time, nor the very extraordinary changes in his circumstance had, in the smallest degree, blunted those grateful recollections of paternal love which the former affection of Jacob towards him was calculated to produce. It is a very impressive lesson to all who, on rising in the world, as it is called, are tempted to shun or to neglect the members of a family, comparatively obscure; it is a strong reproof of that unseemly pride which clings about the heart of man, ever prompting him to make the



most of every exaltation to which he may attain in this mutable world. Joseph was not ashamed to introduce among the proud Egyptian court a company of shepherds, as his father and brethren; nay, he gladly availed himself of that, their inobtrusive occupation, as a means of sheltering them from the dangerous contagion of the palace. Rather would he that his dearest connexions should be held "an abomination to the Egyptians," than have it said of them, they were mingled with the people, and learned their ways. Such is the condescending, mindful love, such the care of the Lord Jesus. No sooner had He fully proved his divinity and immeasurable superiority over the sons of men, by bursting the barrier of the tomb, and taking again the life which he had laid down, than He most impressively made known his retention of the endearing tie that He had formed with His believing followers—"Go," said the risen Saviour to Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father: and to my God, and your God." Thus, in



His glorious majesty, reigning on a heavenly throne, it is his chosen office still to plead and to prevail for the poorest among the children of men who believe in His name : and as Joseph's family, in their own land, were wealthy and distinguished, yet by his discreet management reduced to a comparatively menial station in Egypt, and placed under restraints, so, in many instances, does the Lord bring low ; and keep low in the world, those whom he calls to partake in his glory. He permits the censure, the disgust, of an ungodly multitude to rest upon them, as a means of enabling them to hold fast their integrity, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world.

It would be happy for the serious professors of religion, could they universally attain to a feeling of perfect contentment under this prescribed separation, and abide in their Goshen, their allotted territory, without desiring the polluted enjoyments of an Egyptian neighbourhood. Their dwelling should, at all times, be open to those who come to inquire of them concerning the worship of



their God, or to mark, in their conduct and conversation, the reflected brightness of that true light under which they live. But when the avowed servant of Christ goes to make merry with the world which rejected and crucified his Master; when, under the vain plea of recommending religion in his own person, he exposes himself and his doctrine to the sure, though perhaps secret mock of the profane—he surely wounds the cause that he professes to advocate, and lowers the standard which God will not lower, endangering his soul by striking into a middle course, where, even should he entice others to join him, they can find at best but a false peace, and obtain no lasting benefit. Whether as shepherds, unmolested, independent and prosperous, or as oppressed and persecuted slaves, gathering stubble to complete the tale of bricks, and shrinking from the merciless lash, still let Israel abide in their Goshen, staying themselves upon their covenant God: the untasted delights of idolatrous Egypt may seem fair in the distance, but bitterness is in their most alluring sweets.



When the day of vengeance arrives, when the Lord comes to get Him honour upon his adversaries, in that Goshen alone shall safety be found. There the storm falls not ; there the plague is unfelt. The deep darkness of despair may enshroud the palaces of Egypt ; and the chorus of revelry be hushed in silent terror ; but Israel will yet find light in their dwellings, and from their Goshen the note of praise shall still continually ascend. God's people ever were, and ever must be a peculiar people. In seeking to divest themselves occasionally of their conspicuous badge, individuals may make shipwreck of the faith, and forfeit the privileges which they thus make light of ; but such stragglers change not the character of the flock, nor does their intercourse with ungodly men abrogate the command—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

It is true that Joseph himself was an exception to this rule, for he still dwelt among the Egyptians, and was but an occasional guest in the habitations of his brethren : but



Joseph pleased not himself, he chose not his own path, far less did he wilfully intrude into the palaces of Pharaoh. A most extraordinary work was assigned to him, and in fulfilling it he but followed those arrangements which the hand of God distinctly marked out. There doubtless are instances where the Christian is plainly called upon to mingle with sinners, either in the necessary business of life, or to reprove openly their transgressions, and warn them to flee from the wrath to come. But let him be well assured in his own mind, and let it also be clearly apparent to others, that God does indeed require this at his hands: for that fatal lukewarmness, the end of which is utter rejection from the favour and presence of the Lord, too frequently takes its rise from an attempt to reconcile the service of God with something that He has prohibited, and what has He more distinctly denounced as incompatible with Christianity, than the love of this present evil world, whose friendship is declared to be enmity with Him? An undertaking so fraught with presumption, folly,



and impiety, as that of forming a coalition, of acting as a connecting link between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, can but reap the fruits of shame, and the wrathful displeasure of Him who demands the entire heart—the undivided allegiance of each who assumes to bear His name. Nor can we too seriously meditate on this portion of the narrative, since these things were written for our ensample ; and we know that the literal Israel is a type of the spiritual ; their history abounding in things “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Endued with heavenly wisdom, Joseph directed his kindred to use this world as not abusing it ; and thrice happy is he, who, by the grace of God, is enabled daily to exercise the same divine skill.

Once more, how beautiful a type does Joseph exhibit of the great Forerunner who is gone to prepare a place for His people ! Through many and bitter afflictions our Lord entered into his kingdom ; and thither through much tribulation, must we follow.



His promise is sure, as his power is unbounded: and as Jacob hesitated not to undertake the journey, with all under his authority, on the assurance of again beholding the face of his son, and passing the residue of his days with him; so, and with greater alacrity, should he whom the Lord vouchsafes to call, break away from all local ties, and prepare his whole household, yea, all with whom he has intercourse, to accompany him on the happy pilgrimage. Even our Canaan, on earth, is but a barren and dry land—there is a dearth of all that can satisfy the soul; and until we behold His face in righteousness, whom as yet we see not, we can find no abiding rest. He must give us of the hidden manna, place us as pillars in the heavenly temple, with the delightful assurance that we go no more out. This is the object to be incessantly kept in view; and to this do all His providences tend.

It is a sore and humbling trial to the heart of pride, (and where is that heart from which pride is perfectly eradicated?) when the Lord sees meet to afflict us by the instru-



mentality of envious and malignant foes. We generally find submission less painful, when the blow comes immediately from His invisible power, smiting our health, and diminishing our enjoyments, than when a mortal delegate wields the rod, with permission to vex our souls in the gratification of his own private malice, opposing our interests, invading our tranquillity, calumniating our name, and glorying in the success of his unjust devices. Do we not, in such cases, sometimes venture to complain, and even seek to avenge ourselves, as though this cup also were not mingled by the hand of our God? We do wrong : Joseph was better instructed in the meekness of wisdom. In every recorded instance of his eventful sufferings, he was a victim of the undeserved wrath of man. Nor did the Lord from heaven refuse to humble himself beneath the stroke of human cruelty and wrong.

Some who would not dare to murmur under a fit of sickness, or the loss of a beloved friend, will yet loudly and angrily complain, should man's violence or fraud inflict a wound



on their prosperity. It is natural, the fruit of a corrupt nature, full of proud rebellion. We accord to our sovereign the right of passing sentence, but cannot brook that he should select from among our fellows the executioners of his just judgment. Let us watch against this snare, and, through whatsoever channel the decrees of our God may take effect upon us, learn to exclaim, with old Eli, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good."

It is not always by the medium of those ties which the Lord has peculiarly blessed, that he sees fit to convey his bounties to his children. Although the paternal character is so endearing, that our God makes choice of it, as that whereby most strikingly to set forth his unspeakable love and compassion to the souls that he has redeemed; and although the affection of Jacob for his son was as entire as can well be conceived, yet Joseph found it a bane rather than a blessing.

There appears a remarkable trait of tenderness in the character of Jacob: we are



told, that, when he served seven years for Rachel, “they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her;” and, after the shameful deception practised by Laban, in giving him the elder for the younger sister, “he was content to serve yet seven other years,” to obtain his beloved Rachel; nor does his affection for her appear to have been diminished up to the period of her death. We may therefore judge with how fond a partiality he must have regarded her two sons; and as Jacob was an eminent believer, highly favoured with revelations from God, we cannot doubt that Joseph, in his filial character, enjoyed inestimable privileges. Yet what is earthly affection, in its purest, its most hallowed form, but a gourd, which the Lord God himself may indeed have prepared, and made it to come up, and to be a shadow from the heat, or storm, of the present hour? The same Almighty hand may in wisdom as unerring, and in love as unchangeable, prepare a worm to smite that gourd; and prepare too a vehement east wind, and a burning sun, to bid the mour-



ner feel, in all the helplessness of unsheltered destitution, that the shadow wherein he trusted is indeed gone. These are mysterious dispensations ; and more particularly so, when they overtake us in the path of duty, as was the case with Joseph. He was obeying his father's command in seeking his brethren, when violently torn from the enjoyment of that father's fostering care.

In such afflictions, the sufferer may be dumb, and open not his mouth, because he knows that the Lord did it—a deep sense of his utter inability to contend against that powerful arm, may hush him into silent acquiescence ; for God “doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou ?” But it is no slight measure of faith that will enable a soul under chastisement to exclaim, “He hath done all things *well*.” Sooner or later shall the peaceable fruit of righteousness appear, and prove that the torrent, which beat so fiercely on the shrinking plant, was a fertilizing rain : but who has



not experienced, that “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous?” Let the believer, when in heaviness through manifold temptations, look at the lonely Hebrew in a strange land, severed at once, by a blow equally cruel and unexpected, from all the endearments of home and kindred; wounded in the tenderest feelings of his nature; and doubly afflicted in knowing what anguish must overwhelm his father’s heart on his account. Into these particulars the inspired writer does not enter; but Joseph’s mental sufferings must have been acute indeed, whensoever his thoughts turned homewards. And there, perhaps, they were too prone to turn, and to rest, prizing the gifts above the Giver. It is in our lawful enjoyments that the snare too frequently lurks; and inordinate affection for what the Lord bestows, provokes Him to withdraw the boon. Yet how precious are such privations! How rich the exchange! Father, brother, home, country, wealth, and liberty, were gone; but “the Lord was with Joseph;” and, having nothing, he richly pos-



sessed all things. When affliction has perfected that for which it was called, it can be removed by the hand that summoned it; and where death has not intervened, the heart, subdued and rendered temperate by God's dealings, may find the dearest of its most ancient ties once more clustering around it, as with Joseph; or, like Job, experience a more abundant increase in place of what is irrevocably gone: but the blessed effect of sanctified losses on the renewed soul is often to make it sit down contentedly in the sunshine of God's countenance, and taking him as its all-sufficient portion, to regard as bubbles on the stream those forms of earthly happiness which it has proved to be so unsubstantial and unsatisfying—those broken reeds, whereon if a man lean, they will break and pierce him. He will not ask for flowers on the road side, if assured that road will shortly conduct him to Paradise.

A more thorny, intricate, and discouraging path than Joseph trod, cannot well be imagined—yet was the end glory and peace. Such shall be the termination of all our



earthly difficulties, if Joseph's God be ours;  
and Joseph's faith the support of our souls  
under every dispensation of His Almighty  
hand.

Hush, believer, murmur not,  
Whatso'er thine earthly lot;  
See, thy Saviour reigns above,  
He is wisdom, He is love.

From the pit address thy prayer,  
He will send thee succour there;  
Sold to bondage, marked for shame,  
He his ransomed one shall claim.

He with strength shall arm thy soul,  
Burst the snare, the sin controul;  
He, when slanderous foes appear,  
Make thy righteous dealing clear.

Pent within a dungeon's gloom,  
He shall yet reverse thy doom,  
And with favouring smile convey  
Brighter beams than gild the day.

Humbled 'neath that mighty hand,  
Wait thou still the Lord's command;  
Wait, until the voice divine  
Calls thee to arise and shine.



He, in wealth's beguiling hour,  
Still shall blunt temptation's power,  
Shielding thee with guardian wing  
From a base world's hidden sting.

Though thy path be strange and new,  
Fear not—He will guide thee through,  
Till, revealed in beams above,  
Thou survey the work of love.

Knowing then as thou art known,  
All His wondrous dealings shown,  
Thou shalt catch a theme to raise  
Songs of never-ending praise.



He in wealth's dwelling dwelt,  
Still still about reputation's power,  
Whispering they with suspicion wing  
From a base word's hidden sting.

Though thy path be straight and true,  
Yet not—thou art not—thou art not—  
Till revealed in plainest view.

## THE TWO CARPENTERS.

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IN a small market-town, very respectably inhabited, dwelt a carpenter named George Hardy. He was an active, good mechanic; and being the only person in that place who could undertake the finer sort of work, he had sufficient employment among the gentry. The articles which they ordered were usually made with neatness, but with so little regard to punctuality, that the patience of his customers was generally exhausted by repeated delays in the execution of them. If promises had been sufficient, they had them in plenty; but promising is one thing, and performing is another. Hardy knew it



would be more inconvenient to most of his customers to send to the next town, than to wait his leisure ; he therefore bore very quietly their complaints and reproaches, and took his own time in completing their orders ; still “ pacifying ” them, as he called it, with positive assurances that they should be performed immediately. Like too many other tradesmen, he accustomed himself to this kind of deceit, until it became so settled a habit, that his conscience scarcely reproached him with the falsehood which he daily uttered—he paid little regard to the word of God, or he would have found that his promises were untruths, his deceits were lies. If Hardy was reminded by his friends of the sinfulness of this practice, he would speak of the trifling nature of the offence, and say that the success of his business depended on keeping his customers in good humour. But there is no such thing as a trifling sin, it is the *principle* of obedience that God requires of us ; and to depart from that, in the smallest degree, shews that we are not influenced either by his love or fear.



Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

As to keeping his employers in good humour, nobody likes to be deceived and imposed upon; and if any appeared satisfied, it was only, as the event shewed, because they could not help themselves.

After a long time, another carpenter came to follow his trade in the neighbourhood; he was a young man, who worked neatly and with expedition, but never undertook to do more than he was sure of finishing within the given time. When asked to take home any thing, and complete it immediately, he was used to reply, "I will do it, Sir, as soon as possible; but at present I am employed on work for another customer, which I must first finish: after that I will execute your orders." "But cannot your other customer wait a day longer? I am in haste, and this will only occupy you for a few hours."

"No, Sir," he would say, "I promised the gentleman that I would attend to his business alone, till it was quite finished: afterwards I am ready to do the work for you."



By these means, William Steele established such a character for punctuality, that if he once promised, his customers were sure that nothing but unforeseen accident would prevent his fulfilling his word.

The gentlemen would say, "It is a pity to see poor Hardy losing all his business, thus; but when things are wanted, it is impossible not to prefer a person who will be true to the day and hour that he names, to one who will readily promise for to-morrow, and keep you waiting a week or a fortnight."

One observed, "I expected a large party to dinner: a week before they came, I sent for Hardy to repair a table, charging him not to undertake it unless he was certain of finishing his work in good time—he promised faithfully, as he called it. The day approached; I sent frequently, and the reply always was, that it was nearly done, and would shortly be sent home. At last, the very day before I wanted the table, I went myself to his house—got a sight of my table with some difficulty, and found the work was not yet begun! of course, I ordered it home ; .



and much trouble I had to make out sufficient accommodation for my guests. Never tell me of such a fellow's misfortunes in losing his trade. I am heartily glad to be no longer dependent upon him."

Another gentleman said, "In a circumstance similar to what you mention, I sent for Steele; he told me, it was doubtful whether he could properly finish the work, within the time named by me; but that he could so repair the article, as to make it answer for immediate use, and would then take it home, and let me know how soon it might be completed. He did so, and was punctual in returning it. I would wait any time to employ at last so trusty a character."

Meanwhile, Hardy only laughed at the success of his rival; "A new broom sweeps clean," he would say: "this fellow will soon have his hands so full of work, that some must needs be put off; and then they will bring their complaints and their custom to me again." But he was mistaken: Steele never departed from the rule with which he began; and became such a general favourite,



that the gentry would have forgotten Hardy altogether, if they had not been obliged sometimes to send for him, when the other was too busily engaged to receive their orders.

It may be supposed, that Hardy felt like an injured man; and greatly resented the success of the stranger, which he had himself chiefly assisted to bring about. Steele was very friendly, and wished to obtain his good will: but Hardy became more sullen and rude to him every day; and was even heard to utter very bad wishes respecting this industrious young man. The loss of his business fell heavily upon Hardy's young family, and he was already giving way to habits of idleness and dissipation. When his wife reasoned with him upon the subject, he would answer, "You may go preach to Steele, who has taken the bread out of our mouths, and is driving me to ruin."

Steele had been strongly advised to take a journeyman, with whose assistance he might have commanded the custom of the whole country round; but, with a generosity very



seldom met with in this selfish world, he refused ; saying, that he had none but himself to provide for ; that his own earnings were quite sufficient for him ; and that, by enriching himself at his neighbour's expense, he should heap distresses on the family of a man whom he did not wish to injure.

The minister of the parish, a most benevolent and religious man, had, from the first, admonished Hardy on the sinfulness of his frequent departures from truth, and the disgrace that he would suffer on this account. "And even though you should still prosper on earth," he added, "yet remember, 'it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,' when a strict account must be given of these things which you now regard so lightly, but against which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, and eternal punishment prepared for the transgressors. Depend upon it, Hardy, 'a lying lip is but for a moment : and though you should gain the whole world by unjust means, you must give your soul in exchange, and



the bargain will profit you nothing, but be a fearful and irretrievable loss."

These friendly warnings had no effect: it is the nature of sin, when persisted in, to harden the heart, and to make the conscience insensible, as if seared with a hot iron. Hardy found it so: falsehood became so familiar to him, that he seemed hardly to believe in the real existence of truth: and scoffed at the conscientious dealings of Steele, as if they had been the basest hypocrisy, solely calculated to advance his interests in the world.

Hardy forgot, or did not credit the wise adage, that "honesty is the best policy;" still less did he bear in mind the scriptural declaration, that "godliness is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Matters were going on thus, when it was reported that a rich nobleman, who had a house in that part of the country, long unoccupied, had determined to spend the summer months there; and that his son was come down to see it put in order.



This event roused Hardy. "Surely," said he, "the young Lord will not pass by an old servant of his father's, to employ this upstart, whom nobody knows. I shall take care to put myself in his way."

Very soon after, Hardy had an opportunity of meeting his Lordship, who was walking with a friend; and it so happened, that the gentleman was then advising him to employ Steele, in executing the necessary repairs of the house. Hardy made a low bow, and looked wistfully at them as he passed.

The young nobleman called him back; and it may be supposed, that he obeyed with no small joy; and when asked whether he would engage to perform some work at the castle, within a given time, he was as ready as ever with his promises of dispatch and punctuality.

"This is not what I want," said his Lordship—"you are engaging to do more than I can reasonably expect, and such hasty promises generally lead to disappointment. There is occasion for much work in your line at the castle; and I mean to employ



both you and the other carpenter. I shall then judge of your respective abilities and application."

Hardy was not particularly pleased at hearing this: he had hoped to have the sole superintendence of the men employed; but, relying on his own skill and sagacity, he doubted not but that ultimately he would triumph over Steele.

Returning home, he told his wife how affably the young Lord had spoken to him; and prepared to brighten his rusty tools.

"What a grand thing a Lord must be!" exclaimed one of the children: "what is he like, father?"

"Like any other gentleman, as far as I can see; he is a fine young man, with a mild good-tempered look."

"But are you not afraid to speak to him, father?"

"Not a bit, child: he has no pride, nothing like vanity about him; he dresses as any respectable gentleman ought to do; and speaks to a poor man as if he was made of the same earth with himself."



Hardy was right in his observation: the young Lord was a truly Christian character; and in him the dignity of high birth was tempered by the humility of unaffected piety. He had the habit of recollecting, that every person to whom he spoke possessed an immortal soul; and to do good to that soul was a principal object with him. To effect this, the condescending kindness of his manner led the way; and all who addressed him, felt that they were speaking to a friend.

On the following day, Hardy repaired to the castle in the best spirits; and Steele soon joined him. They settled their plan of proceeding, and Hardy gave himself no small airs of superiority; hinting that his interest with the family had been the means of getting Steele employed at the castle. To such shameless falsehood are they led who wander from the straight path of sincerity and truth!

But Steele treated him with great civility, observing the respect due to an older and more experienced person. They went on well together; and Hardy's tools not being



in very good condition, the other pressed him to make use of his. Hardy gave him no credit for any disinterested good will; he thought that Steele was flattering him, as a means of being noticed by the noble family, of whose patronage he himself boasted immoderately.

By degrees Steele led Hardy to converse on other subjects; and he, having got into tolerable good humour, was less reserved. One day, when they were working together, Steele, being at a loss, was set right by his companion, for which he expressed his thanks.

“Why truly, partner,” said Hardy, “I don’t see any great difference between us, as to workmanship. Certainly, I know as much as you do.”

“A great deal more,” said Steele; “you have had longer practice, and have a very quick eye, and a correct hand.”

“But not enough to satisfy the gentry down yonder,” replied Hardy, rather bitterly, and nodding his head towards the town.

“Ah! neighbour,” exclaimed Steele, “I wish you would allow me to speak to you on



that subject." "I cannot hinder you," said Hardy, sullenly; "they laugh that win, and I suppose they may talk too." "I came to this town," continued Steele, "because I understood there was work enough for a second person, without encroaching on you."

"So there was."

"Well—I never intended or wished to do it: the preference given to me was both unexpected and unwelcome, since it was a clear loss to a brother tradesman; but if you will listen to the advice of a sincere well-wisher, I think I can shew you how to retrieve what is lost."

"With the help of his Lordship's interest," said Hardy, giving him a sly look.

"His Lordship's interest," said Steele, "cannot do away with the objections that I have heard against you; and if those were removed, your own abilities would bring you on without such help;—but I want you to enjoy the interests of one much higher, and more powerful than the Lord of this castle."

"What! I suppose you will send me with a letter of recommendation to another part



of the country," said Hardy, laughing scornfully. "By no means," said Steele, "I would not have you quit this spot; and I assure you there is nothing unfair or self-interested in my motives."

"Oh, I dare say not; but as my Lord's good will is enough for me, I don't need your help. May be you will find a little of mine useful to you before long."

Seeing him determined not to listen, Steele was obliged to leave off; secretly praying that the prejudices of his companion might be removed, and his ear opened to wholesome reproof.

Shortly after this unsuccessful attempt of Steele's, he became so seriously ill, in consequence of a severe cold, that he could not leave his bed. Hardy exerted himself to the utmost in his partner's absence, hoping to prove that he could alone accomplish all the required task; and when his Lordship saw what progress was made, he expressed perfect satisfaction.

Hardy mentioned the illness of Steele in a way that shewed how little regret he felt at



the circumstance ; adding his readiness to undertake the superintendence of what remained to be done.

His Lordship asked when he had seen Steele ?

“ Not since he was here, my Lord.”

“ What ! is he not your neighbour ?”

“ He is, please your Lordship ; but I have little reason to rejoice in that. When he came here I was in prosperous trade, and comfortably supporting my family : but this stranger, by his wheedling, flattering ways, drew the best of my customers from me, and injured me so much, that I have been in very great distress for some time past.”

“ And had your employers no other cause for discontinuing to deal with you ?”

“ None, my Lord. I have always borne the character of an industrious, and, I hope, an honest man. As to my work, your Lordship will please to judge by what is before you.”

His Lordship then said, “ Has any quarrel taken place between you and Steele ?”

“ No, my Lord : if he has given himself



some airs, it is no more than might be expected after such sudden success ; and I am not quarrelsome."

"Did any one tell you that he endeavoured to injure you?"

"His conduct speaks for itself, my Lord."

"It does, indeed," said the young nobleman, thoughtfully ; then after a pause he added, "I have heard a very different account of this matter, Hardy. I was told that your want of punctuality, and neglect of your employers had become quite insupportable : that Steele's conduct being the very reverse, he was therefore preferred ; that he has always behaved to you with liberality and Christian kindness ; and that many of your old friends would employ you, if you would fulfil the promises that you are so ready to make. Is this true?"

"Your Lordship knows that, when I had all the custom of the country, I could not do every one's work as fast as he required it."

"Yet, by your own account, Steele has now that extensive custom ; but I hear of no complaints concerning him."



Hardy was silent, and wished the conversation at an end ; his Lordship went on.

“ I must tell you, Hardy, that, in consequence of these reports, I determined to employ Steele, and sent for him : he immediately requested that the preference might be given to you. I objected ; he pleaded your large family, your industry, ability, and so forth. I consented to employ you with him ; he assured me that you were competent to undertake the whole, alone ; and it was not until I threatened to send for a man from another place, and pass you both by, that he agreed to my terms.”

Hardy felt exceedingly confused and ashamed ; he recollected his boasts to Steele, which the young man must have known to be so grossly false. “ A lying lip,” thought he, “ is indeed but for a moment.”

His Lordship continued, “ I think your sick comrade now deserves some attention from you. Do not let him know that I have mentioned these circumstances ; but consider whether you are not far more blameable in this case than you wish to believe yourself :



and add not to other faults, that of unmerited ill-will against a fair and generous competitor. There is a depth of iniquity in the human heart, which God alone can enable us to discover. I fear you have not sought his help in the task of examining yourself. Delay it no longer; for these seeming trifles are the sparks by which an unquenchable flame may be kindled to consume you." His Lordship departed, and Hardy remained under no very enviable feelings.

To avoid visiting Steele was impossible now, unless he could make up his mind to offend the young nobleman, and to confirm all the unfavourable reports respecting himself: on the other hand, he felt more shy than ever of Steele; since he must appear so very contemptible in his eyes, from his vain and ridiculous boasting. As he proceeded in the evening to his neighbour's abode, these things crowded upon his mind; and the longer he considered them, the more was he puzzled to account for Steele's conduct, in pleading for him with the young nobleman so strongly—"Surely," thought he, "this strange fel-



low could not do it to recommend himself by a seeming act of generosity—he has custom enough, it is true; but if he offended my Lord, he would lose half of it. Did he really suppose my interest there was so great, that I could cast him out, if he got into favour without my help? It is a difficult matter to understand—either he must be the most cunning, or the most foolish young man that ever I met with.”

It never entered Hardy's mind to account for Steele's conduct on the simple Christian principle of loving his neighbour as himself, and doing unto others as he wished them to do unto him; though Hardy knew that these things were commanded in the Bible. Had he seen any one acting against the laws of the land, he would have been ready enough to deliver him up to justice; but keeping God's law, was to him an unaccountable piece of folly, nor did he seem aware that judgment must overtake those who break it.

Arriving at Steele's cottage, and desiring to see him, he was immediately shown into his room, and cordially welcomed by the sick



man. "This is kind indeed, neighbour," said Steele, stretching out his hand; "take a seat, and let me hear how you are going on."

Hardy had much rough good nature in his disposition, and was really sorry to see the young man so very much altered; he sat down by him, and replied, "Nay, let me first hear how you go on; for I am afraid you are very ill indeed."

"I am rather better," said Steele, "but have had a severe attack of fever."

"It was a bad time, too, to fall sick, comrade."

"It was as the Lord saw right, Hardy. He chooses times and seasons better than we could do; and, like a loving father, he sends chastisement when we need it—if it came not till we desired it, we should have but little, I believe."

"Why, that is true; and it must be a comfort to make such sensible reflections when one is laid up, at a busy and gainful time."

"How do you go on at the castle, Hardy?"

"Pretty well: the young Lord was there to-day, and seemed quite satisfied."



"He is an excellent young man," said Steele.

"Yes, he seems well enough; but is it not odd for a nobleman like him to do what his father's steward would be a more fit person to manage?"

"It seems so to many, but I have heard that he takes every opportunity of studying the characters, even of the very poorest; that he may better know how to supply their wants, both temporal and spiritual."

"What do you mean by spiritual wants?" asked Hardy—Steele paused—he seemed at that moment to be praying, and so, no doubt, he was, for help in answering a question so important; and, before he could well reply, the clergyman entered.

After kindly speaking to Steele, he turned to Hardy, and expressed great satisfaction at seeing him there.

"Now," said Steele, "I will ask Mr. Norton to answer your last question."

"No, no," replied Hardy, confused, "don't trouble him with such nonsense."

"Speak out," said Mr. Norton, who knew



that no nonsense would interest Steele at such a moment—the question was immediately stated to him.

“A most important inquiry, my friends,” said the old clergyman. “Sit down, Hardy, and with the Lord’s help I will endeavour to answer it, in some measure: tell me what you conceive to be our chief bodily wants?”

After some consideration, Hardy replied, “Air to breathe, food to eat, clothes to wear, and a shelter from the weather.”

“Right; and under these heads we may also arrange our spiritual necessities.”

“You know it is said, ‘The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.’ The life thus bestowed was twofold; that natural existence which we enjoy in common with all animals, and the spiritual life with which man alone, of all creatures on the earth, was gifted. It was the power and the will to love and serve God, and to enjoy communion with him in prayer and praise, ascending from the inmost heart. When Adam diso-



beyed, by eating of the forbidden tree, he incurred the penalty—‘in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die:’ this spiritual life was extinguished by sin; and eternal death was the sentence under which Adam laid himself and all his posterity.

“Now, God, by giving his own Son to suffer in the flesh for our sins, opened a way of escape from this terrible doom. The believer in Jesus Christ is raised from the state of death in which his soul lies until quickened by divine grace; and by the power of his Redeemer, he is raised to walk in newness of life.”

“You mean at the resurrection, Sir?” said Hardy.

“No—the resurrection of the body is an event that shall happen to all: I speak of the new birth, without which, our Saviour says, a man cannot see the kingdom of God. He who, while living, partakes not in this spiritual resurrection, shall indeed be raised up at the last day; but it must be to shame and everlasting contempt. So you see, Hardy, we want breath, a new existence, and power



to continue it, for our souls no less than for our bodies."

"It seems so, indeed, Sir; but all this is very new to me."

"Surely I have told you the same thing from the pulpit, times without number."

"Perhaps you have, Sir; but I confess I did not understand it as I now do."

"The next thing we want," said Mr. Norton, "is 'food to eat,' food that a man may eat of, and live for ever. I have told you that it is by the death of Jesus Christ alone, we can recover the life of the soul, which Adam lost: He who gives us a new being must also support it: the means by which He does this are, his written word, his appointed ordinances and sacraments; and, above all, his own flesh and blood."

"Please to explain that, Sir."

"By the flesh and blood of our blessed Lord, is understood His incarnation—His appearing in a mortal body to suffer for our sins. On this great mystery of 'God manifest in the flesh,' we must feed by faith—we must make it our own, by receiving Him as



given for us, and see that He dwell in us, or we have no part in His salvation."

"But, Sir," said Hardy, "how can I know that Christ dwells in me?"

"By the fruits of the Spirit which will be produced from such a root—by feeling that you hate sin, love holiness, and are zealous that God should be glorified in your body and your spirit, which are His: by finding your sinful inclinations weakened, and your endeavours after true piety strengthened, in answer to the persevering prayer that the Lord teaches His children to live in. You will love all mankind for His sake, particularly those who, you know, love Him—you will rejoice to do good unto all men, especially unto them of the household of faith."

Hardy looked down, shook his head impatiently, and it was plain he could not find the original of this picture within.

"I must be more brief in noticing what remains," said Mr. Norton. "We need 'clothing and shelter:' in our natural state, the soul is as naked as the body; and all we can do to render it otherwise, is but half



hiding it under 'filthy rags,' that can never find admittance to God's presence. We need a better righteousness than we can furnish; and He who feeds, must also clothe the soul, in raiment clean and white, such as He can look upon with complacency. For shelter—alas! what a fearful storm of wrath must burst on the defenceless head of the impenitent sinner! Let us hasten to the Rock where alone we can find a refuge and defence. Jesus Christ is that rock, that sure foundation, on which we may build a house that shall stand the shock of the wind and the waters, and endure for ever and ever."

After having kneeled down to pray beside the sick man's bed, Mr. Norton left the house. To Hardy all was strange, and so new, that he seemed to have entered into a different world: but he was not inclined to talk; nor did Steele urge him to do so: after a few kind words he took his leave.

Mr. Norton was lingering near the house, and, as Hardy passed, he said, "Hardy, read your Bible: pray to God to enlighten your understanding; and search into these things



of which you confess yourself so ignorant ; for on them depends your salvation."

Returning home, Hardy had very little to say ; the recollection of what he had heard made him feel unsettled and uncomfortable. At one time he was inclined actually to get his Bible, and begin to read the New Testament with attention—but he did not immediately, neither did he pray. Like a morning cloud, did all the good impressions that he had received melt away ; and he rose the next day with a determination to be more friendly to Steele, but not to puzzle himself any farther about things that were very suitable for a sick bed ; but, as he foolishly and wickedly reasoned, quite out of season with a man in perfect health, who had his way to make, and a family to provide for, in the world.

Desiring his wife to call and see Steele before dinner, he went to the castle as usual. At night his wife told him, with breathless eagerness, that the strangest thing had happened—for, while she was sitting with Steele, the young nobleman himself had come into



his room.—“Impossible !” exclaimed Hardy. “Nay, it is true ; and Steele was so much confounded at it, that I thought he never would have got voice enough to speak : so his Lordship turned to me, and asked me how he did. I am sure I courtseyed down to the ground, and told his honour that I had not been long there ; but had come by my husband’s desire. Then Steele spoke out, and said, “Hardy is her husband ; and he is very attentive to me.”

“Did Steele say that ?”

“Indeed did he ; and told how you sat by him yesterday, and listened to Mr. Norton’s discourses.”

“What did his Lordship say ?”

“Why, he smiled as sweet as mortal man could do ; and spoke to Steele about the Lord Jesus Christ, till it seemed to me that I am no better than a heathen, to think so little of Him who died for sinners.”

“Aye, wife, they have an odd way of talking—better not perplex ourselves with such things—we have the children to look after.”

“Yes ; and his Lordship spoke of them,



and how they must be brought up either for heaven or hell ; till I was scared at the charge that he said God laid upon me."

" You see it all comes to that—it makes us uncomfortable ; think no more of it."

" But I shall, though. If they say true, we are quite in the wrong, and the children, poor things ! will go on in our way ; so I am resolved to consider it for their sakes."

" Do as you like : you will soon be tired."

" I shall pray to God not to let me be tired, if I am to get any good by going on. I fancy you would gain little if you were to lay down your tools as soon as you felt fatigued, and leave off work."

Hardy laughed : but the remark was not altogether lost upon him.

" Is it not strange," said he, " that a nobleman should visit a poor carpenter ?"

" Steele said something like that, and he directly answered, ' If you call that condescending, let us turn our view to the grace of Him, the Lord of heaven, who deigned to become poor for our sakes.' Those were his words—I shall never forget them."



“Pho!” said Hardy, “you are taken with the young lord’s fine manners and title, so you listen to him: you never minded these things when old Mr. Norton said them.”

“True enough, George; I never minded them before, the more is my sin and sorrow; but I will mind them now, and follow the good advice that I have got.”

She did so—she read her Bible with prayer; and received the blessing promised to those who search the Scriptures that they may do the will of God.

In the mean time Steele recovered slowly; Hardy worked diligently, and received a handsome recompense when the noble family took possession of the castle. Several also of the neighbouring gentlemen again employed him, being very much urged by Steele to do so; and it was impossible for Hardy to deny, even in thought, that the young man really acted from a most benevolent and kind feeling towards him—they became very intimate, and at length, at the recommendation of the young nobleman, entered into a partnership, on condition that Hardy made no



promises but what his friend would sanction.

Not long after, while cutting a board carelessly, Hardy got a dreadful wound in the leg, which laid him up, in a state of great suffering, totally incapable of any exertion. This occurred too at the commencement of a severe winter, and just after the young nobleman, whose health was very delicate, had set out on a tour through the southern parts of France and Italy.

Steele worked early and late; he supported the family, and was to them as a brother born for adversity. While all his leisure time was passed in more earnestly pressing on the attention of his suffering partner those truths which he had so wantonly banished from his thoughts in the hour of prosperity, as only suited to a season of affliction; but Hardy found that comfort was not to be had at his own pleasure.

A deep gloom overspread his mind; he felt conscious of being a very great sinner, but at the same time was unable to mourn for his sin as he ought to do. In vain were the penitential Psalms, and similar passages



of Scripture read to him : in vain were confessions poured forth by those who knew the language of a contrite heart: Hardy repeated after them whatever they said, but secretly felt he was mocking God with words in which his Spirit bore no part. Believing that he could be sorry whenever he pleased, the unhappy man had paid no regard to the declaration that Jesus Christ is exalted to give repentance, as well as remission of sins ; and not seeking that gift in due time, he was left to feel that godly sorrow can only be excited through the influence of the Holy Spirit, who, like the wind which bloweth where it listeth, is free in His operations, and not to be made obedient to the caprice of men.

One day, when Hardy's wife was trying to speak comfort to him, he suddenly exclaimed, "I wish I was a Roman Catholic!" In the evening she repeated the remark to Steele, who asked him the reason of so strange a wish ; "because," said Hardy, "I could then confess to a priest, say some prayers, do some penances, pay for a mass or two, and have my mind set at rest by the absolution of the church."



“ You are like a man wandering in a dangerous wood,” said Steele, “ with very little light glimmering to direct him, but enough to show a path that will lead out of this maze ; and because the light does not increase so fast as you desire, you want to be struck blind, and fall into a pit rather than make any further attempt to extricate yourself.”

“ How do you make that out ?”

“ Why,” replied Steele, “ you are in a state of sin, and in great peril of eternal death ; but the light of the Gospel shines sufficiently to show you the misery and danger ; and the same light reveals a way of escape—you want to turn from this sure, though seemingly distant deliverance ; to avoid the task of seeking, and praying, and waiting the Lord’s time ; and you would delude your soul with the inventions of man which cannot profit, but only render you insensible to the destruction to which they lead.”

“ But,” said Hardy, “ If I really believed in these things, and acted to the best of my knowledge in doing them, surely I should be saved ?”

“ Surely not,” said Steele ; “ we are not



left to grope about, and find for ourselves a way to heaven. The one way provided by the Lord, is revealed to us. If we do not seek to know and to follow the directions which He has given us in his word, on our own heads is the sin, and the inevitable destruction that must follow it. Suppose you had to pass a very deep and rapid river, over which one safe bridge was built by the king of the country; who sent forth a proclamation that no one else should attempt to make a passage across the river, and that the bridge he had laid would bear them safely to the opposite side—suppose you must pass this stream, and while one man read to you the proclamation, another said, ‘I will lay a plank from side to side, and you can walk over it;’ then if you turned away from the king’s law, and ventured upon the rotten plank, and were swept to destruction in the sight of those who were safely walking over the bridge, would you deserve their pity?”

“Indeed,” replied Hardy, “I should not be such a fool as to make the experiment.”

“Well—the bridge is the path of life ap-



pointed for those who would escape eternal ruin: the Bible is the proclamation that declares it alone to be the safe road, and forbids all others. The devil is he who tempts you to disregard God's word, and trust yourself to such planks as he can lay, that he may rejoice in your fall."

"Now suppose," Hardy replied again, "that a man puts the proclamation in his pocket, and will not let me read it?"

"Then he is a rebel and a traitor to his sovereign; and, as such, unworthy of your regard.—Besides there are copies of the Bible to be had in every place, thanks be to God; and who has a right to debar you from using what your King, the King of heaven, gives, and commands you to attend to, as the revelation of His will? whether we read it or not, we shall be judged by it at last."

"Then you consider the Roman Catholic religion one of the planks?"

"Every thing," replied Steele, "that differs from the way pointed out by the Lord, is a delusion of Satan; and that the Roman Catholic religion does so differ, we have



proof enough, even in the conduct of its teachers, who dread the introduction of the Bible among their people, as the first step to their leaving that church. While God clearly reveals and declares that there is no other salvation than that brought to us by the Gospel—no other name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved, but that of his Son—the Roman Catholic religion bids us rely on our own works, prayers, penances, and the merits and intercession of fellow-sinners, who had no help in themselves when living, and who certainly cannot help us now they are dead. God says, ‘Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord;’ yet you will find the Church of Rome selling pardons for the most dreadful departures from God’s law, and teaching its followers that to eat meat when their Priests command them to eat fish, is a more deadly sin than to blaspheme the name of Christ, and to do all manner of evil to his people. Our unhappy Roman Catholic brethren have indeed forsa-



ken the fountain of living waters, and hewed to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. But, whatever you call yourself, if you are seeking salvation by any other means than by the blood and merits of Jesus Christ alone, you are venturing upon a path that must end in destruction."

"Neighbour," said Hardy, "I will put another case, suppose the bridge is shut, and I cannot get over it?"

"That is supposing that God can change which is impossible. The entrance of this bridge is narrow, but none were ever refused admittance who sought, and asked, and knocked, according to the command of our Saviour. If you turn away in impatience, it is a proof you do not believe, that no other passage can be found."

Hardy was silent; he could not deny the truth of what his friend said, and felt that to be told by men he was in the right path would no more avail him, than being told that his leg was healed would enable him to get up and walk, if it was untrue. Compelled, therefore, to look to God alone for help and



peace, he prayed incessantly for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and listened eagerly to every consolation held forth in the Gospel.

One evening, Steele came in with a sum of money, the payment of a long and hard piece of work which he had done; he gave it all to Mrs. Hardy, reserving only his subscription to the Bible Society, which nothing ever induced him to encroach upon.

Hardy saw the gold given to his wife; tears stood in his eyes, as he held out his hand to this generous friend. "I have been thinking, Steele," said he, "that only for your noble conduct to me, I should now be perishing with all these about me; starving, from the consequences of my sinful habit of telling falsehoods."

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not all consumed for our sins," replied Steele. "I was the means of injuring your trade, though I hope it was over-ruled to your true benefit; and it is right that I should make some amends."

"Aye, but, Steele, I am sure the people would not have borne with me much longer:



some other workman would have been sent for by them: and the punishment would have fallen without one drop of kindness to sweeten it."

"Then ought you not to be most deeply thankful to the Lord?"

"Yes, I wish I was, as I ought to be! but tell me, Steele, how you escaped the temptation that almost all tradesmen fall into?"

"Every state," replied Steele, "has its own particular snares; and every man a sin that besets him more constantly than others. Knowing this, I was enabled to watch against what I had reason to apprehend most danger from. I always wished to appear a moral character, even before I thought any thing of religion as the main business of life; and pride kept me from telling an untruth; but this pride itself is sin, in God's sight; and he who indulges one evil feeling at the expense of another, obtains no victory over himself: it is only wearing the same badge on a different coat. The change in our general appearance does not render us less the



servants of sin ; nor prevent our receiving its sure wages, eternal death."

"But how did you get over your pride?" asked Hardy. "So far as that is conquered," replied Steele, "the work is the work of God ; not mine. He enabled me to see myself a sinner, exposed to his wrath ; and in trying to overcome my evil propensities, I found so much to make me abhor myself, and to humble me entirely at the foot of the cross, where alone I could look for pardon and acceptance, that it was not possible for such a self-convicted offender to continue proud. When I understood to what my iniquities had exposed the Lamb of God ; and considered the mockery, the anguish, and shameful death endured by Him, to save such as me from perdition, I was abased in the very dust of the earth, and could only cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Encouraged to believe that in Him I have indeed found mercy, and endeavouring to persevere in a life of holiness, I feel myself so constantly opposed by the snares into which I am often too ready to fall, and by daily experience so



convinced, 'that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' that it is enough just to look at the law of God, and then at myself, to preserve me free from pride in my miserable attempts to be a faithful servant. If we would oftener consider what duties we have neglected, as well as what actual sins we have committed, it would help to keep us and self-righteousness at a wide distance."

"But you kept your rule of telling truth, though you could no longer glory in it," observed Mrs. Hardy.

"Yes : feeling my own weakness, I relied more and more upon the strength of the Lord ; and strove after what was meet to adorn the doctrine which I profess. Indeed, since I have renounced self-dependence, and lived more by faith, I must say worldly temptations have not so much power over me, as I feared they would always have. I believe that the Lord has given me a new heart, because I can say His law is my delight : and because I hate sin, as that which He hates, and which dishonours Him, as well as being what would destroy my soul."



“I used to think,” said Hardy, “that when you sat reading your Bible, and refused to join in the idle follies of those about you, and saved your money for religious societies, that you were choosing a very hard path to heaven; and punishing yourself on earth that you might be sure of getting there at last.”

Steele smiled; “If you knew what pleasure the Bible affords me, you would own I was seeking my own gratification, instead of punishing myself, when I meditate upon its pages. As to the amusements of which you talk, they are worse than nothing to me: they steal from me the treasure of time, for the use of which I must give account: and they unfit me for the enjoyment of the truest pleasures—communion with God, in His word, and in prayer. This would be the case if there was nothing of what the world calls harm in them: but judge you whether it is so, when you consider to how much mischief they lead. Profane and immoral conversation, drinking, quarrelling, and every excess; besides squandering the money that we ought to expend on our families. When



I have been compelled to look on a party of dissipated mechanics, thus employed during their leisure, or still worse on the Sunday, I have sadly asked myself if these could be a part of that great multitude, who shall stand before the throne of God, in white robes, with palms in their hands—if these were the disciples of Christ, a peculiar people, purified, and zealous of good works, whose names are written in the book of life ; and, alas ! we know that all whose names are not written there, shall be cast into the lake of fire.”

“ Steele,” said Hardy, “ I never thought thus on these things before.”

“ Because you have not known either God or yourself. The Bible, which showed them to me in so awful a light, is revealing them also to you ; and its lessons, I trust, will be blessed to the saving of your soul. Can you wonder that I delight to add my little contribution to the stock out of which God’s book, the written message of his mercy to fallen man, is sent forth into so many poor habitations, ‘ to give light to them that sit in darkness, and the shadow of death ; and to guide their feet in the way of peace.’ ”



“It is against this God that I have been sinning all my life,” said Hardy; “and what a base, unthankful wretch am I!” He now loathed himself for his iniquities; he grieved over the rebellion of his heart, and, drawn by the cords of love, followed the Saviour, who had not only redeemed his soul from death, but crowned him with such tender mercies, and loving kindness, by means the most unexpected and providential.

Hardy now could pour forth the confessions of a soul deeply troubled, to Him, who invites the sinner’s approach: he found consolation in every page of Scripture, and rejoiced in the assurance of pardon and everlasting salvation. The tranquil state of his mind promoted his bodily health: and though wasted and weakened by long confinement, he got about again, and worked very hard, to release his benevolent friend from the burden of supporting the family.

One day Hardy was returning from a gentleman’s house, where he had been to receive some orders, when at a little distance before him he saw one whom he immediately knew



to be the young nobleman. He ran forward, then drew back, and again impelled by feelings which he could not overcome, placed himself in his sight; bowing low, but not able at once to speak.

“Hardy!” exclaimed his Lordship, “is it you? How are you going on?”

Hardy replied, that by the blessing of God, he was doing well in every respect.

“That includes a great deal,” observed his Lordship, “are you aware of it?”

“Yes, my Lord—it includes all the mercies granted through Jesus Christ to the vilest of sinners.”

“Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift! you rejoice me, Hardy. Had Steele any part in this good work?”

Hardy replied by relating with the highest animation, the whole of Steele’s generous conduct to him.

His Lordship was much moved by the recital; but he only observed, “If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

But he did not forget the two carpenters; finding on inquiry that Hardy was become in



every respect a changed character ; that his adherence to truth and sincerity was as marked as his deviations had formerly been ; and that no man could be more patient, steady, and industrious, or bring up his children more carefully in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; he made it his care to watch over the interests of the family, and befriended them materially.

Often was Hardy painfully reminded of his former evil courses ; and frequent occasion had he to mourn over the remaining corruptions of a nature that he could never wholly subdue. As might be expected, those who before laughed at, or excused his transgressions, when he did evil without restraint, now watched for every little slip in his daily conduct, and brought it forward as a heavy charge against the religion which he professed. Lamenting one day to Steele that it was so, the latter replied, “ We always shall find it thus ; and surely these mistaken friends pay a great and justly merited, though perhaps unintentional, tribute to the perfect purity of the faith to which they object. While we lived



in the ways of the world, all our vices were looked on as matters of course, and called by the gentlest names. Now, that we profess to be led by the Spirit of God, the slightest appearance of evil, a hasty word, or a mistaken opinion, is laid hold of as a proof that we do not truly belong to that number among whom we enrol ourselves. Nay, our former sins, once so lightly regarded, are now called up to mind, and exhibited as proofs that our present profession must be hypocrisy. Do such seek to prove that Christian purity is unattainable, or do they hope to excuse themselves, in their gross transgressions, by the comparative falling short of others? Alas! they little know how deeply we afflict ourselves for what they so harshly censure—or how anxiously we press towards the mark for the prize of our high calling, in proportion as we feel our spiritual enemies active in casting hindrances, and spreading snares in our way. Weak, wavering, and fearful in ourselves, we are obliged to petition more earnestly for Divine help, and to feel that ‘in the Lord alone we have righteousness and strength.’”



Reader, have you, like Hardy, cast God's righteous law behind you, and allowed yourself in what your conscience condemns?

If so, I beseech you, pause for a moment, and reflect what must be the end of these things. Satan, who is called by our Lord the prince of this world, may allure you with the expectation of those advantages to which you now attach great importance: but, in the hour of death, at the day of judgment, what will they avail you? When the earth, with all its works, is burnt up, where is the fruit, the profit of those things, whereof, even now, you must be often in your hearts ashamed? The fruits of them you must reap, to your eternal confusion, for the wages of sin is death, and those wages will undoubtedly be paid, if you obtain not deliverance from the curse of the law, which now speaks condemnation against you. Mercy is freely offered in Christ Jesus; but delay not to accept it—such presumptuous indifference will only add to the weight of your fatal sentence: you have been told of one who, by signal mercies, was led to lay hold of the hope set



before him in the Gospel; but consider how very many are swept off into darkness and despair, while neglecting this great salvation. While you live in sin, you are the enemy of God, and confederate with Satan. Can you rest satisfied in so awful a state? I hope not. Listen to the voice of gracious invitation: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for He will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for He will abundantly pardon:" "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and was sent to bless us, by turning away every one of us from our iniquities, and enabling us to glorify His Father, by bearing much fruit of righteousness and true holiness all the days of our life.

O bless the Lord, my soul, and own

What wondrous mercy He hath shewn:

Not as our sins demand he gives;

Behold, the pardoned rebel lives!

Then let me shun the hateful road,

Where walk the impious foes of God;



Abhor the place where sinners meet,  
Nor loiter near the scorner's seat.

A band there is, by Jesus prized,  
By Satan feared, by man despised,  
Who turn them from terrestrial toys,  
To meditate on endless joys.

"Come thou with us," they cry, "and view  
The glorious land we journey to;  
To us and ours that land is given,  
A heritage reserved in heaven.

"Come, and partake the gift divine;  
Believe, and all its wealth is thine."  
Bid me, O Lord, the call obey,  
And join them in the heavenward way.



## FATAL ERRORS.

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I WAS lately visiting at the house of a friend, remarkable for the benevolence of his disposition, and readiness to sympathize in the sorrows of the afflicted. Accompanying him in a rural walk, we approached a small cottage, the sight of which extorted a sigh from my friend, as he remarked, "There dwells a poor woman, whose present situation is particularly hard. She lost her property by fire; and her son, a fine, active, promising young man, was burned to death in trying to rescue some of the goods. She has now but one child remaining, a daughter of ten years old, in a rapid decline. Shall we go in, and offer a few words of consolation to the sufferers?"



I readily assented, and we entered the cottage.

In a small chair, near the few embers that glimmered on the hearth, sat a pale, interesting little girl, whose looks bore evident traces of approaching dissolution; her mother, who appeared a very respectable woman, was ironing at the farther side of the narrow apartment. Deep sorrow was marked on her countenance, and her soul was evidently cast down and disquieted within her.

At her respectful invitation, we seated ourselves, and my friend addressed her.

“I am sorry, Mrs. Cooper, to see no change for the better in your little girl; but we must not expect it.”

“I am aware of that, Sir,” she replied, “and have made up my mind to the loss: not the first, but probably the last that I shall endure. Nothing will then be left of which I can be deprived, and it is plain I am to have all my troubles in this life.”

“Indeed it appears so,” said my friend, “and your lot is severe; but two things should comfort you—first, that you might have been



even worse off; and, next, that you will certainly be rewarded hereafter for the sufferings so patiently endured here."

I was startled to hear such consolation given, as confidently as if it had been the doctrine of the Christian religion.

Mrs. Cooper replied, wiping her eyes, "It is very true, Sir: I might have been burnt with my poor boy, or disabled for life. My lot is not so hard, but I can say, I have seen others in greater distress: it is bad enough, however, to assure me that the justice of God will make me amends in the world to come."

My friend now looked compassionately on the little girl; and, taking her hand, said, "Betsy, I am sorry that you are likely to leave your mother; but, you know, we must all die, and you are fortunate in being taken to heaven, while still so young and innocent. You love God, do you not? and have kept His commandments?"

Before the child could answer, her mother eagerly exclaimed, "Indeed, Sir, she has; there never was a better girl on earth; and, if there is an angel in heaven, she will be one."



My friend was much gratified : he spoke more to the same purpose ; and, when we had left the cottage, remarked to me, “ Is it not delightful to see such patient resignation under afflictions so severe ? it would grace a philosopher.” I felt much distressed : his whole view of the case, in all its bearings, was so plainly contradictory of God’s word, that I could not remain silent ; while it seemed hardly possible to dissent from him, without appearing unreasonably severe, in checking his benevolent satisfaction.

But the Scripture says, “ Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.” Whatever was calculated to seal up a soul in spiritual blindness, duty demanded that I should protest against. I therefore replied, “ No doubt this poor woman shews much resignation ; and if, by a philosopher, you mean a heathen moralist, I allow the justice of your remark : but, my dear friend, does not Christianity present these things in a very different light ?”

He replied, “ By no means. The religion that assures us of that which the heathen can



only guess at—the equal distribution of future rewards and punishments—gives a brighter colouring to this picture of reliance on God's justice."

"Alas!" said I, "if justice reign alone, who shall abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?"

"Very true," answered my friend, "but we know that He is merciful. He will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss, but will pardon us for the sake of His Son."

"And, if pardon itself be a gift bestowed only for the sake of another," said I, "how can we venture to look for high rewards on the plea of our own deservings?"

"Will you not grant me," asked he, "that afflictions are sent in mercy?"

I replied, "They may be made the means of conveying mercy to the soul, when it is prepared by the grace of God, like David's, so to receive and improve them: when they are regarded as the just punishment of sin, calculated to excite self-examination and prayer, answerable to that message, "Be zealous, therefore, and repent." But, if you



mean that suffering, unaccompanied by sanctifying grace, is a mercy, I must deny it. The evil angels are reserved in chains and darkness to eternal punishments, and they are not objects of divine love and favour."

"But surely you would not compare good men to devils?"

I replied, "In the sense in which you use the word, 'There is none good, save one; that is God:' the whole race of mankind are corrupt; 'They are altogether become abominable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' Yet, between us and the rebellious spirits, this important difference subsists: 'Christ took not on Him the nature of angels;' had He suffered for them, they would be as we are: had He not died for us, the lot of all mankind must eternally have been as theirs."

"I cannot deny," said he, "that it is through Christ alone we are to expect mercy."

"Yet, my friend, you encouraged that poor woman to look for eternal life as the reward of her merits."

"Her sufferings, I said."



“Doings or sufferings, it amounts to the same thing, and in fact goes to dethrone the Lord Jesus from his exaltation as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.”

“How so?”

“God made man upright: Adam lost the divine image from his soul: he transgressed, fell, became a vile, guilty, polluted, condemned sinner, and in this state begat children after his own likeness; a resemblance too fatally explained by the dreadful deed of Cain, his eldest born. ‘In Adam all die.’ We are subject to temporal death, not as a sufficient punishment for our iniquity, but as the entrance to eternal death. We are all spiritually dead, too, incapable of raising ourselves from this abject state of sin and alienation of heart; delighting in evil, rejecting the good, and shunning the light that would reveal to us the misery of our condition.”

“But has not Christ delivered us from this condemnation, and reconciled us to God?”

“He has done all that was necessary for us,” I replied; “but is nothing to be wrought



in us? Suffering is the consequence of transgression, and must be the lot of man, as long as he bears about the body of sin and death, derived from Adam: but, if these afflictions be regarded as an atonement, a plea of merit, for what purpose did the Lord die? What need of redemption, if our endurance will appease God's wrath? We shall never come to Christ for salvation, while we rely upon any thing in ourselves: the feast is spread; but of what advantage to the invited guests, if they prefer feeding on husks? The lamb is slain; but, if any Israelite neglect to apply the blood to his own door-post, the destroyer will smite him, however securely he may fence round his dwelling. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' So utterly corrupt and vile is our nature, that it must be altogether changed, old things must pass away, all things must become new. 'If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature.'"

"Still," said my friend, "I cannot see how this applies to the subject on which we were speaking."



“ We were speaking,” answered I, “ on the possibility of claiming heaven as a debt from the justice of God to His creatures. If we are in a state of alienation so great as to need the exertion of the same mighty power that raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, to quicken us to newness of life ; if that life which we receive be not our own, but Jesus Christ living in us, as the apostle expresses it—how is it possible that creatures so guilty, so dependent, can advance a title of their own to a crown of glory, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away ? When the Christian smarts under an afflictive rod, he regards it as the consequences of sin, and reflects on the exceeding bitterness of that cup which the Son of God vouchsafed to drink, that our anguish might not be hopeless and eternal. We, being by nature the children of wrath, being all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness as filthy rags, and needing no less powerful a purifier than the blood of God’s own Son to cleanse our pollutions, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation



and godliness, for whose redemption so vast a price is paid? Yet where do you find the individual who faithfully performs all that God commands? Shew me such a man, and I will point out to you the word of truth, that declares him an unprofitable servant, he has done but that which it was his duty to do. But, in the whole range of creation, you cannot find one to whom sin does not cleave, continually defiling his every action and thought. We are told, ‘The servant who knew his lord’s will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes:’ and are such stripes, which in their severest form cannot amount to our daily deservings, to be pleaded as a matter of merit with the master whom we have provoked to inflict them?”

My friend asked, “What, then, do you understand by the declaration, ‘Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted?’”

“St. Paul explains it,” I replied. “‘Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of;’ and he adds, for the stronger distinction, ‘the sorrow of the world worketh death.’ They who mourn the cor-



ruption of their nature, and bewail their continual offences against their Creator's righteous law, who can, with St. Paul, exclaim, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' and earnestly seek to attain such deliverance, will in time be enabled to join in the apostle's thanksgiving, that they do attain it through Jesus Christ their Lord; they are comforted in knowing that there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; and as their worldly afflictions, no less than their sorrow for sin, abound, they enjoy also abundant consolation, assuring them that the mercy of God in Christ Jesus cannot fail. That he who ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men, even for his enemies, having already bestowed on them repentance, and given them the earnest of his Spirit, will not withhold that final salvation which is the end of their *faith*, not of their deeds or sufferings."

"You make faith every thing, to the exclusion of morality."

"Tell me," said I, "if you wished to have



a choice tulip in your garden, would you plant the leaves only, or the root?"

"What a question! the root certainly."

"By laying the foundation of faith, I no more exclude good works, than you exclude the flower when you place a healthy root in a well prepared soil. But you may as well drive your walking-stick into the ground, and expect it to become a tree, as look for any fruit acceptable to God, that does not spring from faith alone."

"I wish," said he, "you would explain this faith, of which you speak so confidently."

I replied, "The faith by which the Christian lives, is not a mere assent to the truth of the Scriptures, founded on a conviction that they are the word of God: the devils thus believe and tremble. It is a grace wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, enabling us to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, as being 'made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' It 'is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,' bringing the reality of what



is eternal and invisible, as fully before the mind, as if we already beheld it. This faith controuls the will of man, so wretchedly perverted, and drawn aside from God's holiness. It is the hand that applies to our diseased souls the healing influence of a Saviour's blood and righteousness. It is a gift, not to be laid by in idleness, but to produce an hundred fold by the daily use of its inexhaustible powers. St. Paul says, 'Without faith, it is impossible to please God;' and who shall enter into his presence, not being previously reconciled? He is a consuming fire to all who so approach."

He remarked, "With these views I suppose you are no better satisfied of little Betsy Cooper's safety than of her mother's, if she want this mysterious faith."

"Pardon me, my friend," I replied, "but I was grieved to hear you directing that poor child, and her ignorant parent, to rely on an innocence that belongs not to the offspring of guilty Adam."

"Compared with ourselves, is she not innocent?"



“Against that error,” said I, “the apostle has warned us, ‘They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.’ If little Betsy be innocent in comparison with us, so should we appear beside the midnight robber, and he again might justify himself by the greater guilt of the murderer. The catalogue of human crimes, darkens into deeper blackness as we proceed in the dreadful investigation: and if judged by such a rule, where is the man who will not assert that more atrocious criminality than his own may be found? Yet select from the whole race of fallen man the fairest character that adorns its annals, and I will tell you of the individual so pointed out, that in many things he has offended, that his mouth must be stopped, and he stand guilty and helpless before the judgment-seat, as a rebel against his rightful Sovereign; a transgressor of his laws, and in a state of natural enmity, unless overcome by faith in the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”

“This is a gloomy view, indeed.”



“ To those who will not come unto Christ that they may have life, it is the savour of death unto death : but why should we not come unto Him ? Is not His yoke easy, and His burden light ? Does He not promise rest unto our souls, and a peace that the world cannot give ? Could He die for mankind, and yet feel no anxiety to see of the travail of His soul, and gather the fruit of His bitter agonies ? Is all power given to Him in heaven and in earth for the benefit of His church, and did His own gracious lips declare it to be so, that we might cry to Him for help in vain ? Let us not dishonour Him by so unjust, so ungrateful a surmise : let us not call the prospect gloomy that unfolds the gate of eternal life, and beckons us to enter.”

My friend replied, “ I call it gloomy, because it speaks condemnation to so many who appear to merit a better fate.”

“ ‘ Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.’ We must lament that so sad a fulfillment of this description surrounds us on every side : but let us not



disbelieve, or reject the word, because we see it to be true. You would grieve for a party of thoughtless persons, hastening blindfold to the mouth of a pit ready to swallow them up: you would surely call upon them to turn and live; but though the number and the obstinacy of the self-destroyers should increase, would you, therefore, join them, or suffer their delusion to overcome the evidence of your own senses?"

My friend seemed distressed: he said, "I cannot answer you: but I fear it was wrong to speak so confidently to the child."

"Return, then, and permit me, in the word of God, to point out to her a more excellent way." We retraced our steps: my friend was in a state of perplexity, and I secretly prayed that his understanding might be enlightened, and the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ shine into his heart.

Once more entering the cottage, where our return excited some surprise, my friend addressed the mother:—"Mrs. Cooper, this gentleman wishes to converse with your little girl."



“Is he a doctor, Sir?” she asked.

“No,” I replied, drawing out my Bible, “but I wish to direct her to the Physician of souls.”

“O Sir,” said Mrs. Cooper, eagerly, “there is no need: she is fond of her book, and has read the Bible often.”

Much gratified, I turned to the child, “and what encouragement, my dear, do you find in the Scriptures?”

The colour had mounted to her pale cheeks: she now trembled, her lip quivered: and attempting to speak, she burst into tears.

“You see, Sir, how it is,” said the mother, evidently vexed; “in her weak state the doctor says she ought not to be *troubled with religious scruples*; and as the Bible makes her melancholy, I don’t encourage her to read it. Poor thing! she wants to have her spirits kept up.”

Betsy stole an imploring look at me: I said, “How is it that the word of God makes you sad?”

She answered in a low voice, “It is not the word of God that does it.”



“What is it then, my child?”

“Myself, Sir: the thought of my sinfulness.”

“There now!” exclaimed Mrs. Cooper—I requested her to be silent, and went on. “You are very young, Betsy, how came you to be a sinner?”

“I don’t know, Sir; but I am a great one.”

“In what respect?”

“I have read much in the Testament, Sir, and it is there written, ‘Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect—Be ye holy, for I am holy—The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—If ye love me, keep my commandments—He that committeth sin is of the devil—To be carnally minded is death.’ Now, Sir, though I may not appear as openly wicked as some children who have not my advantages, yet in my heart there is enough to prove me any thing but what God requires; and I am afraid He will judge me by the things written in His book, and cast me into the lake of fire; for, Sir, I have told falsehoods, and done many things to deserve it.”



Again her tears flowed: her mother seemed astonished and impatient—my friend very thoughtful—I proceeded. “For what purpose did Christ Jesus come into this world?”

“To save sinners.”

“Repeat the whole passage.”

“‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief.’”

I repeated, “‘Of whom I am chief.’ Then He came to save the chief of sinners, and why not to save you?”

“That is what I want to know, Sir.”

“And have you prayed to obtain that knowledge?”

“O yes, Sir, yes: much and often, indeed I have.”

I replied, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” I then proceeded to set before her the nature and origin of that iniquity of which she complained. I remarked, how impossible it was for sin to appear so black and hateful in her eyes, as in the sight of a



pure and holy God. I dwelt upon the Lord's expression, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but it was not possible for mankind to be redeemed at a less price than that fixed by the awful justice and purity of the Most High. The sufficiency of the one great sacrifice once offered on the cross, and the work of the Holy Spirit in applying its saving efficacy to the new heart, which He creates in the believer, with the justifying nature of that righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, formed the subject of my discourse to a most eager listener. I then endeavoured strongly to set forth the effects of a lively faith, in the glorious instances recorded in Heb. xi. chapter, to prove it a tree that should be known by its fruits. I concluded with prayer, and an affectionate, but solemn remonstrance, addressed to the mother, on the danger and guilt that she would incur, if still withholding from her child the lamp given to light her footsteps through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

My friend did not renew the subject on



our homeward walk, but on the following morning proposed another visit to the cottage. I joyfully agreed.

Betsy was reading her Testament: she looked up with a smile as we entered, and the mother said, "I believe you did her good, Sir; she has been quite cheerful since." I found the little girl, indeed, very happy: she had dwelt on the unsearchable riches of Christ, with the feelings of one who can appropriate them.

The mother was called away; and Betsy then told me that her brother had been remarkably fond of his Bible, and had often talked to her on the subject of religion, but delayed mentioning it openly in the family until he should be more independent. He was cut off in an hour, and thus proved the fitness of the exhortation—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

I remained long enough in the neighbourhood, not only to see little Betsy finishing her course with joy, but also to entertain a hope that her mother was beginning to consider affliction as less entitled to reward, and sin



more surely an object of divine wrath and punishment. My friend commenced a diligent study of the Scriptures; and by the blessing of God, he is now led to preach the faith which he once ignorantly laboured to destroy—knowing nothing among his flock save Jesus Christ, and him crucified: while his daily life and conversation prove how fruitful in good works is that most holy faith.

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### THE SURE FOUNDATION.

Why build ye on the unsteady sand,  
A worthless house that cannot stand?  
Behold, in winter's stormy day,  
That frail support will glide away,  
And rising billows lightly sweep  
Your fortress to the yawning deep.

God hath a sure foundation giv'n,  
Fixed as the firm decrees of heav'n:  
The changeless, everlasting rock,  
That braves the storm and bides the shock;  
There build—the gates of hell in vain,  
Against that rock their war maintain.



Christ is the rock, the corner stone,  
Faith rears her beauteous house thereon :  
Adorn'd with works of willing love,  
And pointing to the scenes above :  
Where faith and hope their sway resign,  
Swallowed in sight, and joy divine.



THE  
FAITHFUL STEWARD.

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It was evening ; the sun was setting, and the shadows that had been lengthening upon the ground were blending into one mass: the air, which in eastern climates is oppressively hot during the day, now became cooler, and the hour approached when the women of the City were accustomed to come forth, and draw from the wells that watered the surrounding plain.

Beside one of these springs was seen an elderly man, whose countenance, we may conceive, bespoke anxiety, softened by that expression of humble confidence which is to be remarked in a child of God, when making



known to his Heavenly Father, with prayer and thanksgiving, the requests of his heart. This man had travelled with ten camels, well laden, who now bent their knees upon the soft cool grass, and rested after the fatigue of a long journey.

The camel is a beast of burden frequently mentioned in Scripture, wonderfully adapted for the service of man in the sandy plains and parched deserts of Asia, being capable of great fatigue, and of travelling for a length of time without a supply of food. Docile and sagacious, he kneels to receive upon his lofty back the allotted burden, and in the same posture takes his repose. This is a beautiful emblem of the pious soul, whose attitude, whether preparing for his Master's work, or resting in His love, is still that of prayer. The camels now reclining near the city of Nahor belonged to Abraham, and their attendant was the Steward of his house, the faithful servant to whose charge Abraham committed all his worldly goods; and who would also have been the heir of great possessions, had not the Lord blessed his master, in his old age, with a son.



Abraham had been an idolater, dwelling among an idolatrous people, until the Lord called and blessed him, and commanded him to quit his father's house and his own kindred, and go to dwell in the land of Canaan; which, though Abraham had not there any right to so much ground as he could set the sole of his foot upon, God promised to give to him and to his children, as a possession for ever.

Thus it is, that the sinner, living among others as wicked as himself, and neither desiring nor seeking after God, is called by the voice of His mercy in the Gospel, persuaded to forsake the evil ways of a world lying in wickedness, and promised the everlasting attainment of a heavenly country, to which he has no claim whatever, but as the free gift of the Lord Almighty.

The people of Canaan were exceedingly wicked; from one generation to another they provoked the Lord, and were filling up the measure of their iniquities. God, whose long suffering would lead sinners to repentance, did not yet visit them for their sins, but told Abraham that they would at length bring



destruction on themselves; and he, since they were the enemies of the Lord, resolved to form no alliance with them. Isaac, Abraham's son, was now old enough to be settled in life as the master of a family; and his pious father desired to prevent his marrying a Canaanitish woman, by finding a wife for him among his own kindred.

Abraham informed his faithful servant of his wish, and entrusted him with the task of choosing a fit partner for Isaac, and bringing her home to him; but as he could not be sure that she would agree to leave her country and friends with a stranger, the servant inquired whether, in that case, Isaac should go back to marry, and dwell among the people whom his father had left? To this Abraham would not consent. He charged his servant by no means to bring Isaac again to that land: and added, that the Lord, who had called him, and promised to give the whole of Canaan to his posterity, would go before the messenger, and grant success to his embassy.

The Christian, while endeavouring to persuade his former companions to walk in the



same safe but narrow path that he has been led into, may meet with many temptations to return again to the evil world; but he must not yield: though his whole house and all his kindred should prefer continuing in the broad road to destruction, he must consider the value of his own soul; and while he mourns that they will not accompany him, carefully watch that they do not succeed in drawing his steps aside; assured that, in every temptation, God makes a way for his people to escape.

The faithful Steward set out upon his journey, and travelled far before he reached the borders of the city where Nahor, Abraham's brother, and others of his family dwelt; there he and his camels rested, waiting till the women should come out to draw water: but the servant, remembering that he was also the servant of the Lord, from whom every blessing must come, offered up a prayer, that the object of his journey might be graciously fulfilled.

Eliezer, for that was the Steward's name, (Gen. xv. 2.) knew that he might very easily



be deceived by the outward appearance, and perhaps take back to Isaac such a wife as would prove no blessing to him; he also knew that God looketh upon the heart; nothing can be hid from Him; and he alone could rightly direct the important choice.

The prayer of this good servant is so simple and beautiful, that we cannot do better than give it in the words of the Bible: "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water: and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast shewn kindness unto my master." Gen. xxiv. 12—14.

There are things which demand particular notice in this prayer: the first is, the ser-



vant's great faith in the mercy of God, and the reliance which he placed on the fulfilment of the Divine promise towards his master. He knew that wonderful things had been declared unto Abraham, who was distinguished as the father of many nations, the first of the Jews, the most extraordinary people that the world has ever seen; he was also to be the spiritual parent of all who, like him, fully believe every word of God, and implicitly obey His commandments; and of his family was the Messiah to be born, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, in whom all the kindreds of the earth are blessed. Eliezer was certain that the Lord would fulfil all that he had promised to Abraham, and would over-rule every event to the good of His chosen; but he did not therefore neglect the great duty of praying for what was promised. He spoke of one who was already appointed for Isaac; and, while convinced that the purposes of God could not fail, he pleaded as earnestly for direction in the business, as if all had depended upon his own wisdom and discernment. Nothing can be more foolish



and dangerous, than leaving events to take their course, under the notion that our prayers are needless; for when the Lord is mentioning the rich blessings that He has laid up for His people, and will certainly bestow upon them, He adds, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them."

Oh that the house of Israel, now scattered among the nations, and smarting for eighteen hundred years under the rod of God's wrath, would follow the example of Abraham's servant, and use the golden key of prayer to open that treasury of mercies, which the stubbornness of their rebellious hearts still keeps closed against them!

Israel! before thy Saviour bend,

Take to thee words and humbly pray:

Turn to the Lord, and He shall rend

The veil of unbelief away.

O wherefore wilt thou sit forlorn,

The world's reproach, the Gentile's scorn,

While countless blessings rich and free

Are heaped in dazzling store for thee?



Now plead the promises divine,  
Ye chosen race of royal birth ;  
Give Him no rest till Zion shine  
A praise throughout the wond'ring earth.  
The God of Abraham still His name,  
His high memorial yet the same ;  
Ev'n now, as in the days of old,  
The Shepherd of a ransom'd fold.

Though from His way thy steps have err'd,  
Thy heart though hardened from His fear ;  
Unchang'd is the eternal word,  
The Lord will thy petitions hear.  
For Him thy sins have pierced, mourn,  
And He will bind where he hath torn ;  
Restrained will be the chastening rod,  
And Zion shall behold her God.

The next thing we should remark in the prayer of Eliezer is, the strong attachment expressed for his master : there is no thought of his own interest or advantage to be found. Indeed, this man would probably have been a great gainer by the failure of the promised blessings of Isaac, but such selfishness was far from his heart. In Abraham he saw a beautiful example of obedience and fidelity



to a heavenly Master, and those who wish to possess such servants as Eliezer, must shew them a like pattern themselves. How can the heads of families expect their domestics to serve them faithfully in their absence, as well as in their presence, and to study their welfare continually, if they themselves are negligent in their duty towards the Master whom they have in heaven, unmindful of His word, fearless of his threats, making no mention of his promises, polluting his Sabbaths, and omitting to promote the glory of His name and kingdom? It is true, that unfaithful servants must give an account to God of all their sins, and will not be excused for the least of their faults and negligences by the unrighteousness of their superiors; but masters will share in the condemnation of those whom their bad example and cruel carelessness have led into transgression, or continue in it, by never reminding them that the wages of sin is death; and that, if one go beyond or defraud another in any matter, God will shew himself the avenger of all such. From the highest to the lowest, there is but one



effectual check found to restrain the sinful propensities of the human heart, and that is, the Word of God applied to it by the Holy Spirit. Now, if you do not read the Scriptures to your household, and assemble them in daily prayer, what can you expect but that sin will continually break in upon your abode? Like the furious waves, which may sweep away the strongest bulwarks that the art of man can frame, but are not able, with all their tossing and raging, to pass over the barrier which the hand of God has planted in the sand of the sea-shore.

The last observation we will make on this prayer is, the token that Eliezer entreated of the Lord, by which he was to know the appointed wife of Isaac. He desired that, when he asked her for water, she should offer to draw for his camels also.

It would not, perhaps, have been quite modest in a young damsel to make the first address to a strange man, unless he appeared in very great need or trouble; and therefore Eliezer was content that she should only give him drink on his asking for it, which no per-



son of common feeling or civility could refuse: but to draw water for ten weary camels was no light task for a young woman; and he probably thought the offer to do so would display a very humane, as well as courteous disposition.

No doubt he knew that the righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, and that cruelty is a distinguishing mark of the wicked. Can we believe the person who professes to love God, yet torments or neglects the creatures that He has made, and for which He so evidently cares and provides? When we consider the attributes of the Most High, we find mercy shining among them with a lustre so bright, as to make all the rest visible to us, and so soft, as to enable us to look upon them. How could such guilty creatures endure the display of His justice, if his mercy did not interpose? Would not His majesty and might terrify the weak and wretched offspring of the dust, if his mercy did not engage them for our advantage and support? The angels who sinned, and who are left to suffer in chains and darkness for ever, may



naturally desire to involve others in their own destruction—devils cannot be otherwise than cruel ; but that we, who know that God has given his own Son to suffer and to die for us all, and that the heaven from which those angels are eternally banished is, through His blood, opened to the children of men, that *we* should delight in tormenting the poor helpless brutes beneath our care, or leave their little wants unsupplied, is so shocking, so unlike the mind which was in Christ Jesus, that, when we behold such conduct, we may well tremble for those who are guilty of it, and fear they are still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity ; and then let us address the Lord in words like the following :—

Lord, whose truth and goodness shine,

Thou, whose tender mercies flow,

Everlasting and divine,

Over all thy works below :

Hear, while to the conscious skies,

Loud thy creatures' groans arise.

Thou, O Lord, to man hast giv'n

This thy lower world to sway ;



Beasts of earth, and fowls of heaven,  
Fish that in the waters play :  
Forms that creep, and glide, and fly,  
Yield to his supremacy.

While in righteousness he stood,  
Man a gentle rule maintained ;  
All was peaceful, fair, and good,  
Till by his transgression stain'd ;  
Ruined them by Adam's fall,  
One destruction swept o'er all.

Soften, Lord, the stony heart,  
Teach the cruel mind to feel ;  
Man, who caused the creatures' smart,  
Should with kind compassion heal :  
Not for pleasure, pride, or gain,  
Cloud its little span with pain.

Though the poor and helpless brute  
Breathe no voice that man can hear,  
Secret wailings, from the mute,  
Enter thy Almighty ear :  
Every tortured form we see,  
Tells its tale of woe to thee.

If the merciful be blest,  
Richer mercy to obtain,  
Never shall the cruel breast  
Boast that awful threat was vain—



Who compassion hath not shewn,  
Shall of judgment taste alone.

Haste, the precious word fulfil,  
Speed the times of peace and joy,  
When, upon thy holy hill,  
None shall hurt and none destroy ;  
Bid all living creatures raise  
One rejoicing note of praise !

The prayer of Eliezer was most remarkably answered ; the sign which he required was granted ; the damsel to whom he spoke, not only willingly gave him to drink, but proceeded to draw water for his camels also ; and, upon further inquiry, he found that she belonged to the very family from which Abraham desired to take a wife for his son.

Upon discovering all this, Eliezer bowed his head and worshipped. Unlike those who pray for blessings, and then forget from whence they proceed, or ungratefully neglect to render to the Lord, who hears prayer, the glory due unto His name, this faithful servant proceeded no farther in his business, until he joyfully and thankfully acknowledged that hitherto the Lord had helped him.



We must not suppose that, from this example, we are encouraged to ask signs and wonders in our prayers, as Eliezer did. In those times the Bible was not written, and men were obliged to seek some visible manifestation of the Divine will; but now the Holy Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Using them aright, we possess a lamp for our feet, and a light for our paths, that leave us no excuse if we walk in darkness. Eliezer, no doubt, was a partaker in the faith of his master. Abraham, who believed and was saved, was accounted righteous by that faith; and he was one of those to whom our Lord alluded, when he said to his disciples, "Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." These prophets and righteous men believed in a Saviour who was to come, as the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head; and the de-



scendant of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed. They felt their own exceeding sinfulness, and knew that, without some atonement, they could never be admitted into the presence of God. But how ignorant was the greatest and wisest among them, compared with the poorest child in our day, who has the Bible, and can read it! In that blessed book we learn the whole history of our sin, and the Lord's mercy. We are told how mankind became corrupt and abominable in His sight, by following the evil counsel of Satan, and disobeying the most high God. We are shown how, by the evil of our hearts, and the temptations of the enemy, we not only continue in sin, but become worse and worse, adding every day of our lives to the dreadful charge against us, by evil deeds, and idle words, and sinful thoughts; by neglecting the laws and the worship of God, and wearying the Lord with our iniquities. We are assured that in this state we must remain and perish, as we have neither the will nor the power to forsake our wicked ways, if God, who is rich in mercy,



had not opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, by giving up His own Son to die for our sins.

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ took our nature upon him, suffered in our stead, and is become the author of eternal salvation to all who believe. That the Holy Spirit changes the stony heart of a sinner into the soft and contrite one of an humble penitent: that he gives a new nature, and renders us capable of loving and serving God, teaching us to abhor the wickedness in which we once gloried, and to watch over our own steps and those of all belonging to us, that we may walk worthy of our high calling, as the children of God.

Sin, of which the world thinks so little, and which it practises so boldly, is made to appear the worst of evils to the renewed mind: while fools make a mock of it, he who takes Scripture for his guide dreads and shuns it, as the gate that leads to everlasting misery; and when he is accused of folly, for choosing to believe God rather than man, the Bible supports and encourages him in the thorny



path of duty, by setting before him the end of these things, and convincing him that he would be nothing profited by gaining the whole world, if he lost his own soul.

Now if, with all these helps before us in the written word of God, we be found indifferent concerning it, and negligent of our duties, shall not the servant of Abraham rise up in the judgment against us to condemn us? he had but very little light, indeed, compared with what we enjoy, yet see how wisely, how circumspectly, how unblameably he walked. If we call ourselves believers, and say we love God, yet fail to study his will for the purpose of doing it, we insult Him, and disgrace his service by our empty professions. Our Lord most expressly declares, that no one can see the kingdom of heaven unless he be born again. This regeneration is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: the careless sinner, therefore, or the neglecter of God's word, cannot be a regenerated person; and, not being so, whatever he or others may think of the safety of his state, he is but one of the lifeless



branches, condemned to be cut off and burned. Yet the Spirit of God can quicken him now: the withered tree may revive,<sup>er</sup> and the soul, dead in trespasses and sins, awake to righteousness, through faith in Christ Jesus, who hath life in himself, and can impart it to whom He will.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, you will find the story of Abraham's servant, and how happily he succeeded in prevailing on Rebecca to become the wife of Isaac. The Lord, to whom he so humbly committed the cause, disposed the hearts of the damsel's family, as well as her own, to fulfil the wish of Abraham; he was not disappointed in his confident reliance on the faithfulness of Jehovah, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, and of whom he knew, that whatsoever He had promised He was able to perform.

The hills shall remove, and the mountains depart,  
And earth, like a cottage, be swept from its place;  
But worlds cannot wrest from the sanctified heart,  
The covenant promise of kindness and grace.



The lightning may burst, and the thunder roll by,  
No tempest can startle the dove from her nest ;  
The Christian, though darkness be spread o'er the sky,  
Has light in his dwelling, and light in his breast.

Then fear not, believer, though, mixed with the throng,  
Their scorn and derision thy portion may be ;  
Make this thy support as thou passest along,  
The Lord thy Redeemer hath mercy on thee.

The Lord is at hand—be thou careful no more ;  
Repent thee, be faithful, be watchful, and pray :  
Soon, soon shall the moment of conflict be o'er,  
And sorrow and sighing will vanish away.



## THE PREMIUM.

“ I THINK I am sure of one premium, at least,” said little Edward, as he placed himself upon the form among his school-fellows.

It was examination day ; and many a young heart was beating quick with the hope of approbation and reward, or with the fear of disgrace. Some had looked forward to this period, and applied to their tasks, as knowing how carefully they would be examined ; and commended or punished according to their deservings : while others had chosen to forget that such a day must come, and idled away the time which they would now have given a great deal to have at their disposal again.



You will own these boys were both foolish and faulty. How much more so are they who neglect to bear in mind the final examination at the great judgment-day ; by sinful and unprofitable lives, treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath !

In the centre of the school room was placed a long table, covered with books of various sizes, and of different value. There were Bibles and Testaments, both large and small ; the histories of Rome, of Greece, and of England. There were volumes elegantly bound, and pamphlets just stitched together. The school was extensive, and it was wished that every one who had exerted himself to the best of his ability, however little that might be, should carry home with him some mark of encouragement, to remind him that diligence and perseverance were not overlooked.

Like the servants to whom their Lord entrusted the talents, some had five, and some had but one ; yet these last could not be excused for hiding and neglecting it because it



was small : and even the youngest and the simplest child at school may make something of the reason and the opportunities which the Lord has given him to improve.

With anxious hearts and busy faces, the little boys arranged themselves around the table ; and were examined with great care and patience by their teachers, as to the progress which they had made in their studies.

Edward was a clever boy, and proud of his cleverness. He loved learning, not so much for the information that he gained by it, as because it obtained for him the admiration of others. His father's mantle-piece was adorned with certificates of his improvement in different branches of study ; and it was his delight to hear himself praised by visitors in the holidays, who were ready to take notice of the numerous rewards that he had earned.

Now, Edward had set his heart upon one particular premium, the Roman History, nicely bound, and making two very pretty volumes, which he thought would handsomely fill up a vacant space on his little book-shelves.



He allowed himself to think of this until no other prize was of any value in his sight ; a great fault, often committed by children, and grown people too ; who, instead of thankfully receiving whatever the bounty of Providence assigns them, would choose for themselves, and become discontented and unhappy in the midst of blessings, because the wisdom of God sees fit to withhold some one thing that their folly deems necessary to their happiness.

Edward passed his examination with much credit, and one of the first premiums was adjudged to him ; but, instead of the Roman History, a very neat Bible, in an excellent large type, was placed in his hands. Many of his school-mates had wished for that Bible, but Edward regarded it not ; and the eyes of the foolish little boy filled with tears, as he saw the elegant History of Rome presented to another, who, perhaps, would have gladly exchanged with him.

The next day Edward returned to his home, and related his disappointment to his



parents, who thought his desire for the Roman History a mark of great learning and taste; but, since he had distinguished himself so well, they did not much care what prize he received.

Edward's father lived in the country, not far from the sea-side, in a most delightful and healthful situation: and, at this time, a brother of his mamma's, who was in a very sickly state, had just arrived there to enjoy the benefit of the sea breezes, and rest a little from the toil and bustle of his employments in London.

Mr. Lewis was a young man of the most pleasing manners and appearance. He was gentle and serious, but not at all gloomy or severe. His bad health only served to shew forth his patience in enduring it, without a murmuring word or discontented look; and Edward, who was really a kind-hearted and affectionate boy, soon became very much attached to his uncle, who had not seen him since he was an infant, and who was much pleased at the attentions which his nephew delighted to pay him.



Young hearts are soon won ; and it was only three days after Edward's return from school, that he went bounding over the grounds in search of his uncle, whose society he already preferred to his hoop and ball.

Mr. Lewis was seated under a fine old oak, the high and knotted roots of which served as a bench ; while the softest moss, interspersed with many delicate little flowers, formed a carpet beneath his feet. A rich and extensive tract of country lay spread before his eyes ; and, at a distance, the mighty ocean bounded the prospect, whose deep green waters were seen in beautiful contrast with the pale yellow cliff, that with a graceful, yet abrupt curve, interrupted the view to the right. Thin clouds were floating past the sun every now and then, casting all the varieties of light and shade upon the lovely scene below.

Mr. Lewis had a book in his hand, into which he frequently looked, and then raised his eyes again to gaze upon the prospect that surrounded him ; and so intent he seemed, that Edward doubted whether he ought to



disturb him, until his uncle seeing him at some little distance, kindly beckoned him to come near.

“Is not this a pretty place, Uncle?” said Edward, as he seated himself beside him; “and do you not find the breeze from the water very refreshing?”

“It is beautiful, indeed, my dear boy: and I am deriving both refreshment and instruction while I look around me.”

“Is that a Bible, Uncle?”

“Yes. It is God’s word, which I always find the best commentary upon his works;—they explain each other.”

“I love the Bible, too, Uncle,” said Edward, “and got much credit for my answering on Scripture questions last half year.”

“And which, Edward, afforded you the greatest satisfaction, the Scriptures, or the credit that you got for studying them?”

Edward looked a little embarrassed, and did not immediately reply.

“It is quite right to take pleasure in the well-earned approbation of your teachers,” continued Mr. Lewis, “and I was glad to



hear that you obtained a premium at the last examination, also."

"Yes, Uncle, but not the prize I wished for. There was a Roman History that I should have liked better to get, and it was just of equal value with the Bible that I got."

"How of equal value, Edward?"

"I mean that it was not reckoned a higher prize; and it would have been a nicer book for me."

"Then you had a Bible already."

"Why, no, Uncle, not of my own; but it is easy to borrow one on Sunday; and I had gone through all my Scripture proofs, and do not want it on other days."

"Do you mean to say," said Mr. Lewis, "that you have already learned all that the Bible can teach you?"

"Oh, no! I should suppose not; but then you know I hear it read at church, and often have a chapter set me by papa in the holidays. The Bible, Uncle, is a very holy book, and not to be thrown about, and used every day like a profane history."

The last sentence was spoken with the air



of one who thinks he has found a good argument to support a bad cause.

“Where are God’s words to be found, Edward?” asked Mr. Lewis.

“In the Bible, Uncle.”

“Then read these four verses for me,” said Mr. Lewis, pointing to the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and to the sixth verse.

Edward read:—“And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

“To whom was this commandment given, Edward?”

“To the Jews, Uncle.”

“What was the distinguishing mark of that nation?”

“They were God’s chosen people, were they not, Uncle?”



“ Yes ; and the word of God, which cannot pass away, is equally binding on us as on them, in every thing excepting the sacrifices and ceremonies, which foreshewed the coming of the Lord Jesus, and which were done away with, by his death fulfilling all those types and shadows.”

“ Then,” said Edward, “ we are commanded to write the Bible on our hands, and on our door-posts ?”

“ No, my dear boy, not literally, but in a figure of speech ; as the Lord, when declaring he never will forget Zion, says, ‘ I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands ; thy walls are continually before me.’ The meaning of the passage which you have just read is, that we must have the word of God as continually present to our minds, as any thing written on our hands, and as every object around us would be to our bodily sight. And how are we to get our thoughts so occupied by it, Edward ?

“ By continually reading it, I suppose,” replied Edward, rather sullenly.

“ By reading it often, and meditating on



it much," said his Uncle, "and that we can do without interfering with our other business.—How many times a day do you eat, Edward?"

"Three times, Sir; at breakfast, dinner, and supper."

"And what you eat at one of those meals is to support you until the next supply; and all your nourishment is dispersed through your whole frame, and makes you grow and thrive. Is it not so, my boy?"

"Yes, Uncle."

"So it is with our spiritual food. By reading, as by eating, we receive what is necessary to nourish our souls; and by meditation, accompanied by silent prayer, the benefit is dispersed through our heart, mind and feelings, shewing its effects in a holy, unblameable, and useful life; just as your fresh colour and growing frame prove that you take enough of wholesome food, and that it agrees with you."

"But, Uncle, I know many people who are as good and useful as you could desire, yet do not read their Bibles except on Sundays."



“And I have seen many wax figures, Edward, well dressed, well painted, and as large as life, which neither eat nor drink. To look at them, you would call them men and women, but a little examination proves them to be mere cheats. So it is with such people, in the sight of God. He has made religion as necessary to the life of our souls, as food to that of our bodies; and to those who reject the spiritual food thus prepared for them, he says, ‘I know thy works; that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.’”

“How can they be dead, Uncle, when I see them every day walking about, eating and talking?”

“What threat did God pronounce, when forbidding Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge?”

“In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”

“Right; and did they die on the day of their transgression.”

“No, Uncle, they lived long after.”

“How, then, do you explain it?”

“I don’t know, Sir.”



“ One proof, my dear, that you have not yet studied the Bible enough. By the act of disobedience, Adam lost that spiritual life which was given him when created after the image of God, and became dead in trespasses and sins. Read the first verse of the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians :”

“ And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

“ Now read the fortieth verse of the fifth chapter of St. John's gospel :—

“ And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.”

“ It is the Lord Jesus who says that to the unbelievers who reject his word. Turn to the fifteenth chapter, and fifth and sixth verses.”

Edward read, “ I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”



“ Now,” said Mr. Lewis, “ do not all these passages tend to the same proof, that men are dead in the sight of God, until quickened, by His mighty power, unto newness of life, and sustained in it by the same power ?”

“ But will the Bible quicken us, Uncle ?”

“ The Bible shews us, at once, our danger, and the way of escape. It proves that we are sinful, lost, ruined creatures, without hope, and without power to save ourselves. It tells us that the just and holy God will assuredly punish sin, and can admit nothing evil into his presence. It represents to us the wonderful mercy of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who, to deliver us from the wrath of Jehovah, took our sinful nature upon him ; and being himself pure and without spot, offered himself up as a sufficient sacrifice for our sins, and a costly ransom for our souls. It sets before us what we must believe and do : exhibits the snares and perils that the great enemy of God and man surrounds us with ; and teaches us how to resist him, and to escape them. It exhorts us to prayer, and gives us encouragement, example, and



matter for our prayers. Without prayer, you cannot obtain any spiritual blessing, nor maintain any communion with God; and without reading the Scriptures you will have very little desire to pray. We are like people wandering in the dark among traps and pit-falls, and near the edge of a great precipice, while the Bible is as a bright lamp held out to us to direct us in the only safe path. You cannot be a child of God if you do not do his will; and cannot do it unless you know it, and it is by the Bible he is pleased to communicate that knowledge. Do you begin to see, Edward, that the Bible is more suitable to be an every-day book than your profane history?"

"Why yes, Uncle; but the Bible is a grave book, and if I read it so constantly, I should become a sad mope, and never could be merry."

"There is no merriment in hell, Edward, and that dreadful place will be your portion if you neglect the great salvation which the Scriptures set forth. Besides, there is no foundation for what you suppose to be the



effect of reading the Bible. I have known people naturally melancholy and discontented, become cheerful and happy by studying it; but I never in my life, saw an instance of a person becoming unhappy because he had a good hope of going to heaven."

Edward paused a moment, then said, "Uncle, I remember it is written concerning wisdom, that 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'"

"Most true, my dear boy, 'quietness and assurance for ever,' is the portion of God's people, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice.' 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.' Are such expressions as these likely to make us gloomy, Edward?"

"Oh no, Uncle; and I often wonder that you who are so weak, and sick, and suffer so much pain, and read the Bible constantly, are not melancholy."

"How can I be melancholy, Edward,



when this Bible tells me that all these things, pain and sickness, and all others, are working together for my spiritual good? That He, who spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, will, with him, also freely give us all things. When I think on what my sins deserve, and see the Lamb of God bearing the chastisement that would fall on me, how can I be melancholy? When I feel that the Spirit of God is bringing these things to my remembrance, and enabling me to love the Lord Jesus, who has done so much for me, must I not rejoice? I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; and since God has promised a new heart and a new nature to all who seek that blessing through his Son; and since I know that I have sought that blessing, and feel peace and joy in believing, surely the song of praise, not the moan of lamentation, becomes me. Yet I do lament, Edward, daily lament my many offences against this holy Lord God, my Saviour and Redeemer; but I am assured that his blood cleanseth from all sin, and that in him I have a power-



ful and all prevailing advocate with the Father. I know in whom I have believed, and that he will never cast off, nor forsake me. I am sinking into the grave, but I do not shrink from that prospect, because the sting of death is taken away, and the grave vanquished by my Saviour, who died for my sins, and rose again for my justification; and when this body returns to dust, my spirit will enter into His presence, and rejoice there for evermore."

Edward looked at the animated countenance of his Uncle, and then cast down his eyes;—they were full of tears. At last he said, "Uncle, indeed I am a very sinful boy, doing many things that I know are wrong, and neglecting the Bible, because I know it would shew me my sin, and frighten me for the consequences of it. But I will trifle no more with God's displeasure. I will get that precious Bible, precious above all books in the world, and I will read it daily, with prayer to God, that I may be made wise unto salvation."

Mr. Lewis did not live long after this.



He died, rejoicing in hope of eternal life; and as often as the holidays restored little Edward to his home, he was to be seen under the old oak, with the Bible in his hand, from which he learned more and more the will of his God and Saviour, and by its means became better acquainted with his own sinfulness, weakness, and inability to help himself. He found that by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and by no other power, he could receive a new heart, and become conformed to the image of Christ, and made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. This help, he found, was to be obtained by prayer; for the Lord has promised that they who ask shall receive. Edward asked in faith and sincerity, and obtained what he sought. He was convinced how foolish and criminal are they who set their affections on earthly things, which cannot continue long; neglecting that awful eternity which is at hand. He saw the waters swell and subside, the trees bloom, and fade, and bud forth again; and grow old and wither away—all these things constantly reminded



him how changeful is this transitory life; and, by the grace of God, impressed him with the duty of improving every moment allotted to him in this passing scene.

Edward's friends saw the alteration produced in him, and even those who did not understand the cause of it, were delighted at the effect; for when Edward became in reality a Christian, and learned to place all his hope and dependence on the righteousness of his Saviour, he felt that he was bound also to follow the blessed example left by the holy Jesus to his followers. He lived in prayer; in a frame of cheerful resignation to all the will of God; and in the constant performance of every good work among the poor, and all around him. He looked back with grief and shame on the many precious hours that he had formerly wasted in vanity and unprofitableness, and found that to "redeem the time" was no less his happiness than his duty. What he had learned he also delighted to teach, and many among his own relations, his school-fellows, and the children of the poor, had reason to bless the Lord for



the grace bestowed upon Edward, whose advice and example led them also to inquire into the things that belong unto their peace.

Edward often thought of his dear Uncle as one amongst the heavenly host, and counted that day happy when he sat to listen to his holy advice, which, as a means brought him to the knowledge of himself, and of his Almighty Father.



## THE BOAT.

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ONCE on a very pleasant morning in summer, a gentleman and his wife left home to pass the day at a friend's house, and as their little girl and boy had behaved so as to satisfy them that they were not unworthy of some indulgence, they were allowed to accompany papa and mamma. The house to which they were going, was a few miles distant: it stood near the bank of a fine river, quite wide and deep, and nothing could be prettier than the gently sloping lawn that led from the house to the water. It was a great treat to little John and his sister Bess, to ride in the gig, through the pleasant shady lanes, to enjoy the smell of the sweet flowers in the



hedges and fields, and to hear the little birds sing so gaily in the trees and green bushes. They saw fine gardens and houses as they went along; but none appeared so nice as the one which they were going to visit, with its neat smooth lawn, and the river gently winding at the bottom of it. Corn was ripening in the fields, and fruit in the orchards—both are the gift of the merciful Lord God to his sinful creatures; who too often look upon His undeserved bounties, and eat of them too, without one feeling of thankfulness to Him who “openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness.”

The gentleman and lady to whom the house belonged, were very glad to see the children with their papa and mamma, and kindly noticed them. After getting their dinner, they had leave given to play upon the lawn, and their papa warned them not to go too near the bank of the river, nor on any account to get into any boat that they might find there. John and Bess had been so often told that the eye of the Lord God was always upon them, and that nothing could ever be



hid from Him who would hereafter judge them—that they had, through the divine blessing on these good instructions, been kept from many evil ways, that children are too apt to go into; and their parents had much confidence in them: I am afraid they were rather proud of this, and that, depending too much on themselves, and looking too little to the Lord for help and strength, they were in greater danger than if they had been truly humble children.

Away they went, and played upon the pleasant green lawn, till by degrees they got very near the river, which shone so clear and bright with the reflection of the sun, that they could hardly keep their eyes from it. At last John cried out, “Oh! look, Bess, what a pretty boat is there.”

“Yes,” replied she, “but we must not go near it.” “We may go near it,” said John, “but we must not get into it.” Bess agreed to this.

If they had recollected what their mamma told them, when teaching them the Lord’s prayer, they would have been aware, that



going of their own accord into temptation, after praying God not to lead them into it, was no better than mocking Him.

To the river side they went—the boat was a very pretty boat indeed, painted green, with black edges ; and it was fastened to the shore by a long chain, which was sunk in the water, while the boat, resting against the bank, seemed fixed to it by a short hook only. “ Oh ! how I should like to get into this pretty boat,” said little John. “ Ah !” replied Bessy, “ that would be disobeying papa ; and you know God sees us, though *he* does not.” John said, “ I will not disobey papa ; for I will not get into the boat ; but I will sit down on the bank, and only put my feet in the boat.” The foolish little boy, like too many children, and grown people too, was ready to go to the brink of sin, and thought, if he did not break the very words of the commandment, he would not be much to blame, though his whole heart was set on the forbidden thing. But God is not satisfied with such obedience. He says, “ Give me thy heart :” and, as we have but one



heart, how can we give it to God while we bestow it upon His great enemy, sin? John thought he had settled the matter extremely well; so he sat down on the bank, which was quite level, and the water there very deep; he put his feet into the boat, and it immediately began to move away. The poor child, frightened, started up, and in a moment fell into the river, between the boat and the shore. His little sister, who loved him dearly, stooped down in great terror, and caught hold of the collar of his coat, trying to pull him out; but, alas! the water filled his pockets and his shoes, and made his clothes so heavy, that he sunk lower and lower; and Bess, having nothing to hold by on the land to support her, must either have let him sink alone, or have been pulled in also.

Now see, my little readers, what an easy thing it is to join hand and hand in sin, but how impossible for sinners to deliver themselves, or each other; and what a dreadful part of the misery that the wicked must suffer in hell it will be, to see those whom they perhaps loved best on earth, brought to that



place of torment also, through their evil example and advice : or their neglect of warning them from the sins which they saw them ready to commit. If God had not taken pity on these faulty children, they would have been deep in the cold waters, dead and stiff, before night : and if the Lord Jesus did not shew compassion to you, and offer you salvation through his precious blood, you would have no way of escape from the far more deep and horrible pit that burns with eternal fire.

Two men, returning from work in the fields, saw this little girl stooping over what they knew to be a dangerous place, and ran to the spot. They came up just as she had become almost insensible from terror, and while one drew John out of the water, the other took Bess in his arms ; and so both were carried to their parents, who were long before they could see the colour return to John's cheeks, or convince Bess that her dear little brother was not dead ; and you may judge how sorry and ashamed the children were to own their disobedience ; but the



Lord put His fear in their hearts, and would not let them add to their sin by telling a lie.

John is grown up now to be a man, and has children of his own; and Bess is a woman, and wrote this story herself for them, and for other dear children, who like to hear of God's wonderful doings, and tender mercies towards His creatures. And she assures them that, though they may be sitting in their quiet homes, and think themselves as safe as can possibly be, yet if they have not learned to know that their hearts are sinful, and that there is no hope for sinners but in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ,—and if they have not begun to pray to Him for pardon, and for a new heart to love and serve Him faithfully, and if they do not daily try to do so, they are in far greater danger than John was in, when he fell into the broad deep river.

### HYMN.

Wide is the gate, and broad the way  
That leads mankind to sin ;  
And Satan's baits are painted gay,  
To lure the careless in.



How may a simple child be wise,  
And hidden snares discern?  
That wisdom God alone supplies,  
Seek ye the Lord, and learn.

O learn of Him, the lowly Lamb,  
His gentle voice obey;  
Walk in His steps, and sure I am,  
You cannot lose your way.

For He was patient, meek, and mild,  
And loved his Father's will:  
The humble and obedient child,  
He guards from every ill.

For you He bade his life-blood flow,  
For you He conquered death;  
His love shall watch your path below,  
And soothe your dying breath.

And He will bear you to the place  
Where sin is known no more—  
With angels to behold His face,  
And His great name adore.



THE  
**BIRD'S NEST.**

LITTLE boy, are you going to look for birds' nests? If you are, stop a moment, and mind what I say to you.

A bird's nest is a very curious thing. You have hands to work with, speech to ask for what you want, and reason to consider what you are doing, yet I think you could not make a nest if you tried for a week. The bird has no hands, only a weak little bill to use, it cannot ask for any thing, and has not reason or reflection: is it not wonderful a bird should do what you cannot?

Here, then, are two things that seem to me very plain: one is, the very great good-



ness of God, who enables the little bird to build her nest, and who takes care that she should find proper things to make it with; and who put green leaves on the trees, to shelter it from the cold winds and hot sun.

The other thing is, the strong love which the poor bird must have for its young, since it can take such very great pains to provide a warm house for them. You see the bird never makes a bed for itself. No: when night comes, it perches on the twig of a tree, pops its little head under its wing, and sleeps away till the morning sun begins to shine, and then it wakes and sings.

But when the bird is about to build a nest for its young, it sets itself to work in earnest. It gathers straw, wool, feathers, and little sticks, and with some clay it makes all fast; and then it lays its eggs, and sits patiently upon them, till they are hatched; and then it searches every where for insects, small worms, and food of different sorts for the young ones. It returns to the nest, feeds them, sits over them to keep them warm, and chirps till they go to sleep.



My dear little boy, perhaps your mother, or aunt, or some neighbour of yours has a baby. You have seen how fond she is of it, how she nurses and feeds it, and puts it to sleep on her bosom ; how she grieves if it is sick, and guards it from danger. And when it begins to go alone, how delighted she is ! how she watches its little steps, and helps it along, and tells every one how cleverly it walks !

Suppose that a strange man was to come to the village, and when the mother is away, and the baby in the cradle, was to snatch it up, and carry it off ! Suppose that you saw him, and were sure that he would shortly cause its death, not knowing how to feed or tend it ; and that the mother would break her heart at the loss of it. What would you do ? I will tell you what I *think* you would do ; for I dare say you are a kind-hearted little fellow. I think you would run after the man, and tell him all this, and beg him not to take the child, and assure him that God would be very angry if he did it. You would say so much, that at last he might



give you the baby. You would go then to its mother, and say, "See here, though I was not big enough to get the poor thing out of the man's hands by force, yet I reasoned it away from him, and here is your dear little child again." Do you not think it would be delightful to see the joy of the mother on receiving her baby; and would you not be thankful to God for making you the means of restoring it to her?

Yes, every body likes courage in a good cause; and cowards deserve to be despised. The man who would steal the child was both cowardly and cruel; and don't you think it is so, to rob a poor innocent bird of her young? When you take the nest away, the bird often sees you; and, if it could speak, it would hop before you, and say, "Oh, Sir, pity me! many a hard day's work that nest cost me, and I thought I had put it in a safe place. Many a long hour I sat over the eggs; and if you knew what delight I feel when the little yellow heads of my darlings come out—or how joyful it makes me to hear them chirp, and to put food in their



hungry beaks ; and how proud I am when they begin to hop and fly, indeed, indeed, you would not take them away ! You don't know the proper food for them, nor when they have had enough ; you cannot keep them so warm as I do. My heart will break if I lose them : dear little man, do, pray, oh do restore them to me again !”

But not a word can the bird say : it is dumb, and its little heart may break, but it cannot complain. No, it cannot complain to you : but there is One who knows the meaning of every sorrowful chirp it gives. God, whose tender mercies are over all His works, notices the little birds : King David mentioned it as one of the reasons why he loved and desired God's temple, that they were protected there. “Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young : even thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God.” And our Lord Jesus Christ said, that though two sparrows were sold for a farthing, yet not one could fall to



the ground without God's consent. He said that his Father cared for them. Now you know, or, if you do not, you may read it in the 12th verse of the 20th chapter of the Revelations, at the end of your Testament, that God has a book in which every thing that you do is written down; and He will judge you out of it. If you can be so cruel, after all I have said, as to rob a bird's nest, I cannot hinder you; but I give you warning that God will surely punish you. He has said, "He shall have judgment without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy." Do you know what that means? You shall be judged and punished for every single sin that you have ever committed, without any mercy at all. And, you know, if you do not share in the mercy of Jesus Christ, you cannot escape hell! a dreadful word! I tremble to name it; but it is better to remind you of it now, than leave you to go there. Dear boy, pray to God to pardon all your sins, and to cleanse you in the blood of Jesus Christ, and to give you a new heart, and make you His



child ; and do be merciful to the poor birds and animals, for the sake of Him who made both them and you.

You will not go for nests now, for, if you do, you will feel unhappy, since you must know that you are doing a mean, cowardly, cruel, sinful action. You will play with your top or ball, run races, or read some good and useful book, especially the blessed Bible : and at night you will smile to recollect how happy the poor bird is sitting on her nest ; and you may repeat these lines, or, if you like, sing them :—

I thank thee, Lord, for keeping me  
From such a wicked deed,  
As injuring the harmless birds  
Which thou art pleased to feed.

Oh ! let me never be enticed  
To walk in sinful ways ;  
But teach me, Lord, to do thy will,  
To pray and speak thy praise.

Teach me to recollect the book  
Of which I often heard,



Where all my deeds are written down,  
And every naughty word.

Oh ! cleanse me in the precious blood  
Of Jesus Christ, thy Son :  
And for His blessed sake forgive  
The evils I have done !



THE  
**BOW IN THE CLOUD.**

JOHN and Henry were returning together from their school, when a very heavy shower of rain came on, and they were glad to take shelter under some trees that grew a little way from the road side. Carefully preserving their books from being wetted, the little fellows stood close together, watching the large drops as they fell around ; and listening to the noise which they made on the surface of a pretty stream, not far from their retreat.

“ I wish it would stop raining,” said Henry, “ I am quite tired of standing here.” “ It will soon be over,” replied John, “ and then the grass will look so fresh, and the



flowers smell so sweet, after the shower, that the rest of our walk will be delightful. God sends rain to make the earth fruitful; and I like to see it fall."

Presently, the sun shone out beautifully, and the rain ceased to patter upon the leaves. Our two little boys left their shelter, and returned towards the road. "Oh! look, brother," cried John, "what a lovely rainbow! It seems so large and bright, and quite near us."

A man who was passing them on horseback heard the remark, and said, "Aye, 'tis very near; and if you run to the place where the end of it rests, you will find a fine pot of money."

"Which end, Sir?" said Henry: but the man was out of hearing, having spoken a falsehood for the sake of a silly jest. This is very wicked: it is also very cruel to deceive the young and ignorant; for, when they find themselves imposed on by bad people, they sometimes are afraid to believe what is told them by good ones.

Now Henry was a silly boy, and a little



covetous, I fear: he stood quite still, and stared first at one end of the rainbow, then at the other, in great perplexity. "Come," said his brother, "we shall be late home."

"And if we take home a pot of money with us, will not that be a good excuse for staying out a little? I wish I knew which end of the rainbow it is at!" "I don't think it is at either end," observed John; "for I have seen rainbows in so many different places, that, if what the man said was true, we could hardly walk a mile any way, without stumbling over a pot of money."

Henry did not mind what he was saying, but went on talking to himself. "That end is certainly nearer to me, but then it is on the other side of the water, and the man must have known I could not get at it. The other is a good way off, to be sure, at the top of the hill; but a pot of money is worth trying for, and I'll have a run. Here, John, hold my book; and if you keep it safe, may be I'll give you a handful of my silver and gold;" and away ran the simpleton, over hedge and ditch. John followed him a little



way, calling him back, but poor Henry thought he wanted to get before him, and lay hold on the prize ; so he ran faster than before, and John gave over the chase.

The Minister, who lived very near the place, had walked out to enjoy the freshness of the air, after the rain ; from a little distance he had seen Henry start off in such a hurry ; and knowing how foolish children sometimes are about such things, he partly guessed what he was about. He pursued his walk ; and came out on the road just where John was quietly going towards his home.

The little boy made him a bow, which the Minister kindly noticed, and then asked him where his brother was.

“ He is gone to fetch a pot of money, Sir ? ”

“ A pot of money ! ”

“ Yes, Sir ; or at least to look for one ” — and John told him what had passed. The Minister could hardly help smiling when he turned, and saw poor Henry at a good distance, sitting on the top of a gate, and looking about in all directions for the rainbow, which had disappeared while he made his



way under some bushes. He did not remain there long, however, but jumped down on the other side, and continued to run up the hill.

“Pray, Sir, is it true?” said John, who knew that the kind Minister would not be displeased at his asking a question.

“No,” replied the Minister, “your brother will meet the disappointment that is usually found by those who seek for what God has never promised. The rainbow ought in a particular manner to raise our thoughts above this earth and its treasures.”

“It is very beautiful, Sir,” said John.

“It is indeed; and we must not forget the purpose which God has commanded it to answer. I hope you remember it.”

“Yes, Sir: I have learned that chapter. God made a covenant with Noah, and set His bow in the cloud, ‘And God said unto Noah, this is the token of the covenant which I have established between me, and all flesh that is upon the earth.’”

“Right: the dreadful wickedness of the world had provoked the Most High to de-



stroy with a great flood every living creature, excepting Noah and those shut up in the ark with him. It was a terrible judgment, and the remembrance of it would be so alarming to us, sinful creatures, that in seeing how much evil there is around us, and feeling the wickedness of our own hearts, we should be in constant fear of such another flood, if God had not mercifully assured us that it should not be."

"Pray, Sir, what is the rainbow made of?"

"It is produced by the sun's rays falling on the watery cloud: you may sometimes see such colours when they shine through a glass of water. It is probable that the rainbow appeared as it does now from the creation: but it was not till the days of Noah, that God chose it for the token of a covenant between Him and His creatures. It is most mercifully chosen; for its extreme beauty, and its situation in the sky, are fitted to lead the mind up to Him who sits above, ruling over all. And as the falling of heavy rains may well remind us how terribly the Lord once shewed that He can drown this sinful



world, it is very gracious at that particular time to bid us remember His promise that *He will not*. Those who live in disobedience to God's holy laws, will hereafter be tormented in fire, though they are secure from the great drownings of a terrible flood of waters now."

John looked down, and at last said, "I am afraid, Sir, sometimes, that God will punish me in that fire; for though I am but young, I can say of myself what the Bible says of people after the flood; 'the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.'"

The Minister looked very kindly on him, and replied, "I am glad that you so well know the sad truth of your own sinfulness, as I trust it will lead you constantly to pray that the Lord will change that evil heart where there is no good thing, into the humble heart of an obedient child. There would be no hope for us after this life, if God had not given us a better covenant than that with Noah; even the covenant of everlasting salvation in Christ Jesus. When we look upon the rainbow stretched over our earth,



let us think of that which is round about the throne of God in the highest heavens. St. John, in the Revelations, says that he saw one: and blessed indeed is he who shall appear before that throne to worship and serve God continually with the holy angels! Those who do so, are they who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; even Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, whose precious blood cleanses us from sin, and by the gift of whose grace we are enabled to serve God acceptably."

By this time Henry, who had turned back soon after crossing the gate, was come within a short distance of them; and the Minister kindly waited until he could overtake them. He looked foolish enough: his clothes were torn, and his face very red, and he was quite out of breath. "Well, my lad," said the Minister, "where is your money?"

"The rainbow was gone, Sir, and I could not find where it had stood."

"And if you had, do you really believe you should have found a treasure?"



“ Why, I don't know, Sir ; but there would be no harm in looking.”

“ Believe me, my child, there is more danger than you suppose in the indulgence of these covetous inclinations. ‘ The love of money is the root of all evil :’ the Apostle tells us so ; and even this foolish chace of yours has done you some harm, has it not ?”

Henry looked more sheepish, and said nothing.

“ Your parents, I know, are not rich ; and even the injury done to your clothes is of some consequence to them : but your mind is injured too ; for you felt angry and disappointed when you found your labour was vain ; and if the rainbow had continued all day in your view, you would gladly have given up your time, neglected your studies and your work, and risked your health and limbs in following after the object of your wishes.”

“ But, Sir, a pot of money would have made amends for all.”

“ No, it would have been a snare to you making you proud, idle, unhappy, and for-



getful of God. The more you enjoyed of this world's goods, the more you would set your heart on them, and the less you would seek after heavenly blessings, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' 'Riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away; and with your riches would fly your comfort. You would have no relish for better things, after cleaving long and closely to the dust of the earth. If riches were good for us, would the blessed Jesus have chosen a life of poverty and humility? Would He have said, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven?'"

"Are there no good rich men, Sir?"

"Yes; there are many in whom the love of God has overcome the love of this present evil world; and who make use of His gifts to promote His glory. But these men do not run after wealth: they would willingly give up all they possess, if such were the good pleasure of the Lord. They pray to be kept from covetousness; and well know



that their silver and gold will witness against them, if they use it for the gratification of their own worldly desires. We are all exposed to the temptations of Satan, and to the working of a nature never free from sin while we remain in the flesh. How foolish, then, to heap together those things which are most likely to give the enemy opportunities of hurting our souls! Tell me, Henry, what did Judas do for thirty pieces of silver?"

"He betrayed his Master, Sir."

"Yes; he committed a sin which it is dreadful to think of, for a handful of money, because he loved money: and from the same cause wicked Balaam would have cursed the people of God, and delivered them up to a cruel heathen king. Covetousness is idolatry. The rainbow, I hope, has been the means of giving you a lesson. I pray God that His works may always lead you to his Word, and both be blessed to your souls."

Beautiful bow! in mercy given,  
A token of love to earth from heaven,  
When thou art beaming bright and fair,  
May I ever behold the promise there!



Beautiful bow ! when the rain-drops fall,  
And the cloud is dark like a funeral pall,  
When the sun has hidden his shining ray,  
And the birds seek shelter beneath the spray :

Beautiful bow ! I will look on high,  
For thou wilt appear to paint the sky,  
And bid earth's mourning children see  
The sign of a covenant God in thee.

Beautiful bow ! a brighter one  
Is shining round the eternal throne ;  
And when life's little storm is o'er,  
May I gaze on that bow for evermore !



## THE MOTH.

COME hither, Maria, and drive that foolish little insect from the candle. He has long been fluttering round it, and now ventures so near, that the flame will catch him. So, he is gliding away on his pretty gossamer wings, more afraid of the friendly hand that guards, than of the destructive fire that threatens his little life.

Now he skims along the ceiling, and might there enjoy security; but I much fear, the light of the candle still possesses the same attraction for him. I wish we could drive him out into the garden, where the stars are glittering beyond his reach, and the sweet cool breeze could not harm him. You do



well to open the window, and we will try to chase him out. Go, pretty creature, you do not know the dangers that await you here—go, to flutter in your own pure element, and leave the glare that tempts you to your ruin.

'Tis all in vain, Maria, he will not depart. See how perseveringly he at intervals approaches the candle, now soaring above our reach, now skimming rapidly past us, now resting high on the wall, now buried in the folds of the curtain; but always passing near the light in his excursions. Well, we will hunt him no longer, but leave the window a little way open, and you may keep guard over the candle.

Already the poor insect has returned to his dangerous station, and approaches nearer at every turn. Well done, you saved him then; but he is little thankful for, or conscious of, your good offices. Never mind, Maria: when we have a kind action to perform, though its object be but a Moth, let us not be discouraged. Gratitude is rarely found, even among men; and when disposed to complain on that point, let us consider



how insensible, how unthankful are our own hearts, under the mercies which the Lord showers upon us daily; and, viewing our characters as in a glass, seek by divine grace to correct in ourselves, what we feel to be so unamiable in others—what in us is so guilty.

Why did you cry out? you have scorched your finger in brushing the Moth from the very edge of the flame, and he has flown off, evidently burnt though not disabled. I hope the lesson will be sufficient to make him keep his distance now. He suffers pain, but knows not what a valuable hint it is calculated to give him. Thus it often is with us: we meet with events that we call unfortunate, and do not patiently examine the meaning of such messages. Nothing falls out by chance, and if in all our ways we acknowledged God, we should find him directing our path continually: but instead of seeking instruction from the occurrence ordered by His providential care, we judge of every thing by our own perverse will, and call events favourable or otherwise, as they ac-



cord with our own inclinations—too often directed towards what is forbidden, and ruinous. The Moth has returned! He is buzzing about the candle more determined than ever to reach the flame. You have struck him rather hard, but it is in vain. You see that he only mounted out of your way, and descends again. You cannot save him—he has plunged into the blaze. See in what agony he now spins upon the table, his limbs burnt and shrivelled up. Put an end to his sufferings, Maria: kill him at once—it is the only mercy we can now shew to the wretched little victim of obstinate delusion. It is well, you have crushed him, and his span of existence is past: but he died in the act of teaching us wisdom, though void of it himself: and we must not lose the benefit of the parting instructions which he affords.

I see you look surprised, and do not understand me. The Moth certainly did not speak to us, nor was he at all conscious of being sent for our advantage; but the scene that we have witnessed, is full of profitable warning. So much so, that I have often



thought, the propensity of these little creatures to perish thus, is brought before our eyes that we may lay it to heart, and reflect on the end of a self-willed course, and pray to be delivered from every temptation.

We must consider the Moth as the type of a human being, and the candle as representing sin, which leads to death everlasting. The great enemy of mankind, who first tempted Eve to transgress, constantly watches to involve us in guilt; the consequences of which he well knows, are as fatal to our souls, as the flame was to the body of that poor insect. He clothes sin in such colours as are most attractive to us, and persuades us that we may safely play on the very brink of destruction, while trusting to our own prudence and virtue that we shall not go beyond the bounds. The history of the world shews us how skilful the tempter is in adapting his baits to the various dispositions of those with whom he has to deal. Judas was covetous: he was entrusted with the bag that contained the slender store of our blessed Lord and His apostles. From this bag, it would seem,



Judas occasionally stole; (see John xii. 6.) and Satan made use of his covetousness to engage him in the blackest crime that ever man committed; he sold for money his Divine Master, whose companion he was, whose teaching he daily heard, and who, in all the beauty of His glorious character, meek and lowly of heart, holy, harmless, undefiled, speaking as never man spoke, going about doing good, and pouring down continual benefits on the evil and unthankful, became an object of bargain and sale with this wretched man, and was by him delivered up to a cruel death. What an awful instance have we here of Satan's power and cunning! We are expressly told that the devil entered into Judas Iscariot for this purpose: he had caused the prospect of a little gain to shine before his imagination, as the candle did in the sight of that Moth, and the miserable sinner suffered his thoughts to dwell upon it, until the temptation became too great to be resisted, and he was fully possessed by the evil spirit. We know the dreadful end of this traitor. When he saw that Jesus was



condemned, he was struck with horror at the enormity of his crime, and would even have returned the wages of iniquity, but it was too late: the blood-guiltiness that he had incurred clave to him; he was driven to despair, and hanged himself; and the Scripture in telling us he went to his own place, clearly intimates that his portion for ever is in outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Now, my dear child, though we cannot commit the same dreadful deed that Judas did, in selling our Lord in person, yet remember that we can betray His cause, dishonour His name, and destroy our own souls, by yielding to the temptations of the same enemy. Some people are soon made angry by trifles, and for such he contrives many little vexations, until the indulgence of their passionate temper, resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit, has destroyed all comfort, and left them a prey to sin and ruin. Some are inclined to be envious: to these, opportunities are given by shewing them people who excel them in beauty, riches, learning, or whatever else the world



terms fortunate ; and envy and emulation are ranked with wrath and strife, and other things that shut sinners out of heaven. For the vain and idle, there are amusements worse than unprofitable, and revellings where the very name of God is forgotten, or only used in blasphemy. Every Moth may find a flame round which to flutter, till he falls a victim to the allurements. The friendly hand that would withhold us, and the kind voice that warns us of our danger, often excite more resentment than gratitude : experience itself, when we have been partly drawn into the snare, and suffered for it in our souls, is soon forgotten, and does not prevent our returning with fresh ardour to the pursuit. It is the nature of sin to intoxicate, and he who begins by playing with temptation, will soon be overthrown by it.

I have been told of a lady who brought up a young bear : it was a harmless cub when she first took it : she was assured by her friends, that in time it would become dangerous, but she would not give up her plaything. After some time, when the bear had



grown large and strong, she was amusing herself with it as usual, and the animal suddenly seized her between his paws, and crushed her so, that she died in a few hours. This is much like the Moth and candle—like the sinner and his sin. The lady should have given up her savage favourite, when told he would become a very bear: the Moth should have flown out at the window when we opened it for him; and we ought to fly from the presence of every thing that Scripture, reason, or experience, tells us may end in endangering our souls. After the Moth had burnt himself, he certainly did not intend to encounter the same pain again; yet he returned to the candle: so it is with you, too often. You do wrong, and feel not only the bodily punishment, but the shame and deadness of spirit, and distress of mind that follow, when the heart is not hardened in guilt: yet how heedless you are, often running into the way of the same temptation again, and laying yourself open to worse consequences than before. It is a sad proof how evil we are by nature, that we always incline to what



is likely to harm us, and shun what we know to be good. Are you not often more disposed for idle conversation and play, than to address the Lord in prayer? Is not a book of mere amusement taken up with livelier interest than the Bible? While making a merit of paying your little contribution to the charitable societies, do you not feel it a greater indulgence to expend money in pampering your appetite, and pleasing your eye? just as the Moth preferred the bright glare, and close heat of that dangerous candle, to the pure fresh breeze that invited him to leave it. In all this we see the necessity of "praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." We not only need a new heart to hate the evil, and love the good, but continual supplies also of divine grace, to prevent our following the bent of a corrupt nature, which is ever joining with the enemy of our souls to draw us aside from the right way. We want faith: the world is ever proving itself an active enemy, and "this is the victory that over-



cometh the world, even our faith." If we deeply consider that the Son of God exposed Himself to be in all points tempted like as we are, "that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest," and that as "He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted," we should be more encouraged to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. A false reliance on our own strength, leads us nearer and nearer to destruction, as the poor Moth, wheeling round the candle, approached it more closely at every turn: whereas, if all our dependence were on the Lord, in whom alone we have righteousness and strength, our house would be built on a rock that could not be moved, and Satan might cause all his storms to beat on it in vain. We pray against being led into temptation. Let us shun that from which we seek to be delivered, and solace ourselves with this assurance, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a



way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

While sporting on the verge of sin,  
We slight the secret voice within,  
And brave the tempter's power ;  
Rejoicing in the circle bright,  
Where pleasure sheds her glowing light,  
That shines but to devour.

Great guardian of thy helpless band,  
Extend, O Lord, thy pitying hand  
To snatch us from the snare ;  
Reveal to our deluded eyes  
Where, shrouded in its beauty, lies  
The spectre of despair.

Man sees a path with flowers bespread,  
And inly longs to bend his tread  
O'er that delicious road ;  
Incredulous, a track so sweet  
Can e'er conduct his willing feet  
To death's profound abode.

O thou who bid'st the day-star shine,  
Illume us with its light divine,  
Let each deception cease ;  
Though thorny be the way, and steep,  
Teach us the narrow path to keep,  
That ends in lasting peace.



THE  
RED BERRIES.

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HENRY WILSON was an only child, very dear to his papa and mamma, who took great pleasure in teaching him all that a little boy of seven years old could be expected to learn. They were careful to instruct him, as soon as he was able to understand their words, that we are all sinners in the sight of God, and must certainly be shut out from heaven, and sent to dwell after death in the place of torment, among bad spirits, if Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who is himself God, one with the Father, had not mercifully taken our nature upon Him, and suffered for our sins, that we might be delivered from the wrath to come. Little Henry was likewise



taught, that we must not only believe in the blessed Lord Jesus as our Saviour, but also obey him as our King, doing whatsoever He, in the Bible, commands us to observe and do, and avoiding what He has forbidden. But, as we are all inclined, by our evil nature, to break God's laws ; and as Satan, the great enemy of our souls, is always at hand to tempt us to do wrong, Henry was also informed that God the Holy Ghost, who likewise is one with the Father and the Son, condescends to dwell in the hearts of those who believe in Jesus Christ, enabling them to strive against sin, and to love and obey the Lord. Henry was taught to pray every day for the aid of this Holy Spirit, without whom he could do nothing pleasing to God ; for it was said by our Lord Jesus Christ, " Except a man be born again, of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Henry had an uncle, who was a clergyman ; his name was Morgan : he lived in a very pretty house, near his church, and had a nice garden. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson took little



Henry with them to pay him a visit, late in the autumn, when the leaves were beginning to fall from the trees—a sight fitted to remind us how soon we also must wither and be mingled with the dust of the earth. When a dry yellow leaf was blown across the path where they walked, and borne out of their sight by the rough breeze, Henry recollected the words of the prophet Isaiah, “We all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have carried us away.”

The day after they arrived, Henry asked permission to walk by himself in the pretty garden, and his mamma said he might do so when his lessons were finished: his papa also consented, but said, “Be sure, Henry, you do not eat any thing that you find there.”

Henry promised, and having said his lessons, away he ran, quite delighted, into the garden. There were a few flowers still in bloom: the China-rose hung its delicate head, and, by bending down so readily, avoided having its soft pink leaves scattered by the wind that would have torn a stronger blossom in pieces; and, when the sun shone warm



again, this rose looked up, as fresh and as sweet as ever. Like the pious soul, which meekly bows beneath the afflictions that God is pleased to send, and, humbling itself under His mighty hand, is exalted in due time; while the proud, rebellious heart, that thinks to brave His wrath, is broken and destroyed.

Several flowers, such as the Michaelmas-daisy, the dark China-aster, and others of such plain and sober appearance, that they would not have been regarded among the gay colours of summer, appeared quite valuable, now that no brighter remained. So it is with the ordinary comforts, that we are ready to overlook while our cup overflows with a variety of blessings, but which we learn to prize when other enjoyments are gone, and they too likely to depart. But the cheerful-looking little flower, the Heart's-ease, was smiling in every place; and Henry knew it might continue all the winter under the sheltering shrubs of evergreen. Neither storms nor losses can destroy that blessed contentment which blooms in the heart of the Christian, who knows that the protecting arm of



his Saviour is still spread over him, to defend and to deliver.

There was very little fruit in the garden : here and there, a bunch of grapes hung on the vine, some winter apples remained on the trees, and a few currants, that ripened very late upon a north wall, were peeping from among the cobwebs and yellow leaves : but nothing pleased little Henry so much as a bush, covered with berries of a deep scarlet, soft to the touch, and bright to the eye. He looked long at them, then ran round and round the neat gravel walks, but still returned and stopped opposite the bush. Henry said to himself, " If papa had not forbidden me to eat any fruit, I should like to pull a few of those delightful berries. How sweet they must be !"

While he was playing about, Mr. Morgan came up, and asked him how he liked the garden. " Very much indeed, uncle," replied Henry. They walked a little while together. Presently they passed the bush which bore the beautiful red berries, and Mr. Morgan, seeing how his nephew looked at it,



said, "You must be sure not to eat any of those berries, Henry." "Oh no, uncle," answered Henry, "papa desired me not to gather any thing."

Mr. Morgan said, "I know it, my dear; and you will always find it your happiness, as well as duty, to obey your parents." After dinner there was fruit on the table; apples and pears, nuts and grapes, and currants; but Henry was disappointed at not seeing any of the fine red berries.

The next day was Sunday—Henry just walked round the garden before breakfast; as he passed the bush, "Oh!" said he, "my uncle keeps this nice fruit for himself. How mean! he deserves to lose some of it."

This was a very naughty saying; if Mr. Morgan did wish to preserve the berries, they were his own, and he had a right to do as he pleased with them. Whatever he gave little Henry, it was the gift of his kindness; and he did him no wrong in denying other things—but it was uncharitable, and therefore unlike a Christian, to suppose that he refused them from a selfish motive. Thus it



is that sinners entertain hard thoughts of God, notwithstanding all his love and kindness towards them. Henry was already more than half determined to commit a sin, and wanted to find excuses to blind his own conscience.

After breakfast, Henry asked leave to walk in the garden, till the time came to go to church. "You may do so," said his papa, "if you walk soberly, recollecting this is the Lord's day, and not yours. Beseech Him to keep your mind fixed on such things as are suitable to the Sabbath. Remember, too, Henry, my charge, not to gather any thing without leave."

"Yes, papa," said Henry, and walked off. What do you think he did? First I will tell you what he ought to have done. The good advice of his papa should have been followed; he should have prayed that his thoughts might be kept on heavenly things; and his heart prepared for the service of God in his house; he should have avoided the place where he knew that he would be led into temptation, and have earnestly asked



for the assistance of the Holy Spirit to oppose his evil wishes. But, alas ! little Henry did none of those things : on the contrary, he went as fast as he could to the bush, and gazed on the red berries till it seemed impossible to leave the spot without tasting them. His heart began to beat very quick, he looked about him, thought of his papa's command and advice, recollected that it was not too late to pray to God, who both could and would keep him from sin, and then—in spite of all this—yielding to the temptation that he might have avoided, he put forth his hand, snatched several berries, and swallowed them in great haste and alarm, as he heard his papa calling to him from the gate.

The berries were not so sweet as Henry expected, but slimy, and of such a sickening taste, that he was soon very sorry for not having followed the kind command which his papa had given him.

To church went naughty Henry, sad and sulky, as those usually are who feel they have done wrong, and begin to think of the consequences ; which Satan always tries to prevent their doing till it is too late.



The Psalm for the day was that very beautiful and awful one, the 139th. I cannot tell you how frightened and miserable the unhappy child felt, while his kind papa, passing his finger under the lines, seemed to point out every word that assured Henry how well his wickedness was all known to the Lord.

The little boy began to feel illness before the prayers concluded, but concealed it as well as he could. At last his uncle appeared in the pulpit, and gave out his text from the very Psalm which they had been reading. This was it: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

Mr. Morgan began by describing the dreadful state of a sinner, who feels that, though his wickedness may be concealed from man, yet God sees and knows it all. Presently he spoke of Adam eating the forbidden fruit, and how he tried to hide himself, when he heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden. Henry was now quite sure that his uncle had seen him; and, as his thoughts became confused by his increasing illness, he



got so terrified, that at last he began to cry and sob most piteously. Finding it impossible to quiet him, and that he also appeared in very great pain, his papa carried him out of the church, and took him home.

When laid upon his bed, little Henry was dreadfully ill, and it was plain that he had eaten something of a poisonous nature. How great was the distress of his parents! For a long time he could not speak; but, as soon as he could, it was to ask for his uncle, who came directly. "Oh! uncle, uncle," sobbed out the boy, "do ask the Lord Jesus to forgive me! I never will do so again."

Mr. Morgan asked him what he had done?

"You know very well, uncle; you told me of it in your sermon."

"No, my child—I spoke of sin generally, and to all the sinners around me. If you supposed it addressed to you, it was because you knew your own guilt. I hope this may lead you to repentance."

"But God will not forgive me, uncle: I knew that I was committing a great sin; and, as soon as I had done it, I felt sure that He



would not forgive me. And, oh! uncle, I am going to that dreadful place where liars, and sabbath-breakers, and disobedient children, and all who despise God's law are tormented for ever!" Then he cried and screamed, and would take no comfort. If any of you had seen little Henry at that time, you would have owned that a feast of many years, on all the sinful pleasures of the world, would be too dearly bought at the price of such an hour as that.

Mr. Morgan and his sister and brother grieved sadly: they prayed long and fervently beside the bed of the unhappy sufferer. The life of the poor child was spared: he felt deeply on account of his sin, and it was well for him that he was taught to seek pardon from God, through the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

And it is for us, dear children, to cast the burden of our guilt and sorrow on Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, and who has promised never to cast out any that come to Him in faith.



But suppose that Henry had died immediately, from the effects of the poison : or, suppose his heart had been hardened to go on in the ways of sin : what would have become of him at last ?—and what will become of *you*, if you neglect to ask continually the help of Him who alone is able to keep you from falling, and to use that help when you obtain it ?

My little readers, and elder ones too, “ Pray without ceasing.” Study God’s word, obey his laws, and seek for safety, blessing, and peace, holiness here, and heaven hereafter, only through the blood and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, “ Who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Can hearts endure, or hands be strong,

When God shall call the guilty throng

To stand before his throne ?

In light revealed each sinful deed,

And each transgressor left to plead,

Unaided and alone ?



O dreadful hour? the false disguise,  
That dimm'd the unbeliever's eyes,  
Too late is rent away :  
See Satan, the accuser, stand,  
Close by the trembling sinner's hand,  
To claim him for a prey.

Be wise in time, to Jesus flee,  
He died to set the captive free,  
And change our fearful doom :  
The Gospel feast is spread for all,  
Who listen to that gracious call :  
“ Approach—there still is room !”



THE  
WILLOW TREE.

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I KNEW a little girl, and a very little girl she was then, who used to take great notice of every thing about her; but, because she did not like to ask questions, she often made strange mistakes, and puzzled herself to no purpose, when she might have learned a great many useful things, which from her ignorance it was not possible she should find out of herself. This is very silly: when children have kind parents or friends, willing to instruct them, they ought to be thankful, and to ask for all the information that they want.

This little girl, Eliza, among other matters, was greatly distressed about a willow



tree, which grew before her papa's house, in the little garden. It was a pretty weeping willow, but not very large. Eliza had taken notice, that, when she sat in the parlour below stairs, and looked across the street, the willow was so tall as to hide from her sight the house of a neighbour over the way; but if she went to an upper window, the tree hardly reached the knocker of the neighbour's door, and she looked over the top of it with great ease; and the silly child thought that the willow stretched itself up, or threw itself down, as if to teaze her; and she was teazed, and used to lie awake at night thinking what could be the reason of it.

At last, one morning, at breakfast, Eliza's papa, seeing her constantly looking out at the window, asked what she saw there to amuse her so much. Eliza would not tell an untruth; so she said, "I am thinking, papa, how odd it is that the willow tree should grow higher than Mr. Davis's house."

"It is not nearly so high, my dear."

"No, papa, not always," said Eliza; "it was little enough when I looked at it half an



hour ago, out at the study window, above : but now it is so tall that I can't see Mr. Davis's chimney."

Her papa smiled ; and explained to her that all the difference was owing to her looking at the tree from above or from below. And he stood up, and bade her observe that his head seemed to her higher than the opposite window, when he stood near her. Then Eliza wondered how she could have been so silly ; and was ashamed to have puzzled her little head so long, when her kind papa would have set her right in a minute, if she had asked him.

When Eliza grew up, she often thought of the willow ; and I will tell you some reflections that it brought to her mind.

There are many things of no great consequence that we keep close before our eyes, and look up to them till we fancy them very grand ; and they hide from us other things much better than themselves, as the small willow tree hid the large house from Eliza. Some children think so much of their toys, that they neglect their books : others are so



fond of looking into silly story books, which they call amusing, that they have hardly any time or wish to study the blessed Bible, or listen to instruction. Some take great pride in fine clothes, and will not see how wicked and ugly, in God's sight, are the hearts which they try to hide behind these gay dresses. Many care for nothing but play, and are always about some foolish amusement or another, thinking it of more importance than knowledge and piety, because they allow it to keep these better things out of their minds. Some desire to be rich, or beautiful, or famous, when they grow up; and never spare a look towards death and judgment, which are behind all those worldly enjoyments.

In these cases, and many more, we may suppose that we see little Eliza, with her eyes fixed on the willow, thinking how tall and grand it is; while indeed the reason is only that she keeps so near to it, and looks up. But when, by God's mercy, children are able to look down upon what the world loves, they are, like Eliza at the study win-



dow, above stairs, able to see all the better prospect beyond, and not finding the willow at all in her way.

Solomon was a very wise king; but he became much wiser by considering these matters. He had great riches, and learning, and all the good things of this world; but he found that they were all "vanity and vexation of spirit." They stood in his way, and hindered him from looking to the glories of heaven. Like Eliza's willow tree, they shut out the best part of the sky, and he got weary of them. Then he sought the wisdom which God gives to those who ask it; and found himself far happier in looking down upon the world, than ever he had been in looking up to it.

Eliza lost a great deal of time in thinking about the willow, and in running up and down stairs, while her little companions were busily employed at their tasks; and afterwards she was sorry to find how far they had got before her. She was quite right in wishing to understand what she saw, but quite wrong in not applying to those



older and wiser than herself. So it is in too many cases, where we choose to trust to our own wisdom, and do not like to seek that which cometh from above. We often hear children say, "I don't think there is any harm in it," or, "I dare say it will not be wrong;" when they wish to do a thing which they are afraid is not right. Now, at such times, instead of guessing about it, they should try to remember whether the Bible does not speak of such actions as sinful—whether they are such as the holy and pure Son of God would have done, when He was upon earth; for we are commanded, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," and we are told to follow His example.

When Eliza was about ten years old, her papa went to live in another place; and after she grew up to be a woman, she visited again the house where her childhood was spent. The willow tree was gone: it bore no fruit, and therefore was only for show; and the people, who wanted something useful in their little garden, had thrown it away.



Then Eliza recollected what our Lord says in the parable of the barren fig tree ; and how, because he found no fruit on it, He said, “ Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?” Eliza reflected how many of her dear little friends, who used to play with her under the willow tree, were laid in the cold grave already, and she was very sad when she thought that some of them had been like the unfruitful tree, for she knew the terrible doom of such, “ Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Dear children! can you bear to think that the righteous Judge may one day say this of you? If He does, it must be your own faults ; for Jesus Christ has told us how willing He is to receive little children, and to bless them. Some people go on in sin, for a long life, and do not hear of the love of Christ in saving poor sinners until they are quite old ; and then they look back on the years that they have so wickedly mis-spent, and are afraid to come in their old age to Him whom they did not serve in their youth :



but they should not be afraid to come to Him, because He will not cast them out, but will receive them, and wash away their sins in His precious blood, and give them a new heart, and enable them to pass their few remaining days in His faith and fear.

Some young people, when they hear the aged invited to repent, and to believe in Jesus Christ, that their sins may be blotted out, are so very foolish and wicked as to say to themselves, "When I am old, I will do so too: there is time enough yet. I will live in pleasure, and not trouble myself now about religion; but before I die, I will repent and believe in Jesus Christ." What! do not children die, and middle-aged people too? There are graves of all sizes in the church-yard. I have often seen a little coffin, that the nurse could carry under her arm, with a small baby in it that died on the lap; and I have seen one or two men, bearing a larger child to the grave: and I have seen six men stooping beneath the weight of a heavy coffin, containing the body of a strong, stout man in it, who seemed as flourishing a little while before, as the green willow tree;



and like it was suddenly cut down. And while God is showing us thus how frail we are, can we talk of putting off to another year the work of Him of whom the Psalmist says, "*To-day*, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts," and who said to the ungodly rich man, "Thou fool, *this night* shall thy soul be required of thee?" No; you must obey Him now, because He calls you now. You are not like those poor creatures who do not know the danger their souls are in. You have Bibles to read, and the Bible tells you that you are sinners before God, and that He knows the things that come into your mind, every one of them, and will judge you for your wicked words and thoughts, as well as for your wicked ways. It tells you too, that Jesus Christ died on the cross to make satisfaction for sins; and that if you will believe in Him, they shall be remembered no more against you. And while telling you this, the Bible also tells you that "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Jesus Christ must save you from the power of sin in this life, if you are saved from the punishment of sin



hereafter. He even asks you to be saved, He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He stands at the door of your hearts, and desires you to let Him in, that He may cast out all the evil things which are in it, and come and make it a place fit for Him to dwell in. And do you think the Son of God is to stand knocking and calling to you all the morning of your youth, and the day of middle life, and till the night of old age comes on, even if you were sure of living to be old? and then, when you find you *must* die at last, you will let Him in, not because you love Him, but because you would rather be happy among the blessed spirits, than be tormented for ever with the devil and his angels. Oh, do not expect that God will be so mocked. All those things which now keep you from Him will perish like the willow tree, and leave no fruit; and you too, like the tree, must be cut down and cast into the fire, unless you listen to His merciful call, "Come, ye children, and hear-ken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord." If you were a little lamb, would you



not rather be taken care of by a kind shepherd in a safe pasture, than run about the streets to be worried by dogs, and destroyed by cruel people? Behold, Jesus is the good Shepherd, who giveth his life for the sheep, and He is willing to gather you with His arm, and to carry you in His bosom, and to give unto you eternal life; so that you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of His hand.

Bent downward, like the willow leaf,  
We fix our eyes below,  
Where crawl the forms of sin and grief  
And weeds of folly grow.

Look up, ye simple one's, and view  
True wisdom stor'd in heaven;  
Ye need but ask, and unto you  
The precious gift is given.

Serve God in fear; his hand shall lead  
Your wand'ring hearts aright:  
Serve Him in love; your souls shall feed  
In pastures of delight.

Serve him in faithfulness below,  
Through scenes of doubt and strife;  
In heaven He'll bless you, and bestow  
A radiant crown of life,



THE  
GLOW-WORM.

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It was a very fine evening in August; Mr. Bruce and his little boy and girl were walking through a beautiful shady green lane, where the lofty trees, meeting far above their heads, only afforded, here and there, an opening through which they could see the dark blue sky, with small stars faintly twinkling upon it. Day light had not been gone long enough to allow their brightness to appear: there was still a strong mellow tint of the twilight that is so lovely at that season; and those stars seemed few, and small, and pale, and distant, because the glorious sunshine had left so much of its power around. Thus the Christian, who has been in fervent prayer



and felt the presence of Jesus Christ, that "Sun of Righteousness," shedding light on his soul, when he looks again on the poor comforts and delights that worldly people love, sees them hardly worth his notice. God gives us many mercies, and we must not despise the least of them, as they come from Him ; but the great mercy, with which no other can compare, is His love to our souls, in giving his only Son to redeem them from sin and everlasting death.

Something like this Mr. Bruce was saying to his children, as they walked along. The usual time for the children to go to rest was past ; and their father had permitted them to stay up longer, because he wanted to shew them a pretty sight. He had brought them through the shrubbery, and over a field of new-mown hay, the sweet smell of which was delicious. He now led them along this pretty lane, where the hedges were gay with honeysuckle, and the grass that bordered them was spotted with little wild flowers. Ellen and Fred were delighted ; it was a place where they had often walked by day,



but never before in the evening: and they found it as new as if they never had seen the green lane till then.

After a while, they came to a spot where the trees and shrubs grew thicker; and a great many large bramble bushes threw their branches from the top of the hedge down to the grass below; united with spreading plants of dock and mallow, and tall thistles.

“Now,” said Mr. Bruce, “look about, children, and observe the hedges.”

All on a sudden, little Ellen called out, “Oh! Papa, Papa, there are stars in the hedge!”

Fred ran to look, and said, “I don’t think the stars are apt to tumble down, nor, if they did, to look so small; but certainly there are some very pretty little lights in the grass.”

“Oh! very pretty indeed, brother,” said Ellen, “prettier than beads, or spangles, or any thing else in the world—they *must* be little stars.”

“Let us gather some, sister, for Mamma. Look, there is a cluster of them under that



great leaf: I shall soon catch them. Oh! I have burnt my fingers! they are all fire."

"I rather think," said his Papa, smiling, "that your fingers have been scratched by the prickly points of that thistle leaf under which you were thrusting them. The glow-worms will not hurt you; and I would rather you left them alone in their snug corner; for your rough grasp might give the poor insects pain."

"Are they glow-worms, Papa?"

"Yes; and very pretty creatures too, are they not? See with what a soft yet brilliant light they shine among the leaves, slowly moving up and down. Walk on, and you will find them more numerous. Under that broad bramble there is a cluster of them; and a little way off, you may see them scattered singly about the grass. Was not this worth coming to look at?"

"Oh yes, Papa, thank you for bringing us," said both children; "but may we not take some home?"

"For what purpose?"

"To shew Mamma," said Ellen.



“ To see them in the house,” said Fred.

“ Your Mamma often walks here to admire them without disturbing their comfort. However, if you wish it, I will take one back with us ; and, when you have examined it, how shall it be disposed of ?”

“ I will keep it in a box,” answered Fred.

“ No, brother, that would be cruel,” said Ellen.

“ You would deprive it of its liberty,” observed his father.

“ Then I will put it in the garden, Papa.”

“ That is a better thought ; but why separate it from its companions and its home ?”

“ If you would not mind the trouble of bringing it back, Papa.”

“ Indeed, Fred, I should feel myself most unfaithful to the charge which God has given to man—the task of ruling His inferior creatures—if I considered that a trouble which would save a poor, helpless, little insect from a lingering death. Never, my dear children, suffer yourselves to be made ashamed of what too many call the weakness of such feelings. This poor worm, continued Mr.



Bruce, as he carefully placed one of them in his handkerchief, "is as sensible of pain and of hunger, as you are. Its present existence is its *all*: and at this moment it depends on us whether it shall end in torture, or be left to the lot assigned its harmless race. I dare not hurt this insect, Fred. I dare not, because cruelty is a distinguishing mark of the wicked. I dare not, because 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' If I now commit cruelty, can I then expect mercy? If I wantonly injure the creatures of God, can I think that He will acknowledge me his faithful servant? No: He has said, 'Blessed are the merciful,' and in that he threatens a curse to the cruel."

The children loved their Papa's instructions; and, when he had done speaking, they thanked him, and said they hoped that they should never be cruel. Then they talked again of the glow-worm.

"How beautiful it will look by candle-light!" said Ellen.



They hastened home; and the children went jumping into the parlour, crying out “Mamma, we have brought you the prettiest thing in the world.”

Mamma smiled, and asked what it was.

“Oh! Papa has got it in his handkerchief: come close to the candle, if you please, Papa, that it may shine.”

Mr. Bruce laid his handkerchief on the table, and unfolded it, while the children put their heads together, expecting to be quite dazzled when the glow-worm should appear. How great was their disappointment on beholding a little, ugly, dark worm, or grub, of a dirty brown colour, and no brighter than a piece of old leather!

“Oh!” cried Ellen, “it is not a glow-worm.”

“Indeed it is,” replied her father.

“*That* a glow-worm, Papa! oh, I think that you have made a mistake. You picked up in the dark that ugly old grub, instead of one of the sweet, beautiful, shining glow-worms that made the hedge look as if it were full of stars. What a pity!”



“The glow-worms,” said Fred, “are round, like little balls of glass; they are yellowish and greenish, and quite different from that old grub.”

“Well,” said Mr. Bruce, laughing, “the old grub seems to have displeased you greatly by his inelegant appearance. I must try to raise him a little in your opinion.” So saying, he placed the insect on the crown of his hat; and, desiring Ellen and Fred to keep their eyes fixed on it, he carried it into a dark corner of the room, accompanied by the children.

“Aha!” cried Fred, in great glee, “Papa has played us a trick; for there’s the glow-worm, instead of the grub.”

“The glow-worm and the grub are the same thing,” said his Mamma; and she brought the candle to shew them it was so.

Fred looked at his sister, and his sister looked at him. Their little heads were quite puzzled—so their Papa led them back to the table, and began to explain the matter.

“The glow-worm,” said he, “is, as you see, a very ugly-looking insect: dark, dull,



and hardly to be distinguished from the earth on which it moves. It possesses, however, a bright, luminous substance, which, in the absence of other light, shines out beautifully. By day, a thousand glow-worms might creep in your path, and be no more regarded than so many ants—indeed, they have rather a disgusting appearance, to those who admire beauty alone. But, at night, when the butterflies have folded their gay wings, and the flowers have closed their cups, and even those objects which undergo no change, cannot afford us pleasure by their loveliness, because the darkness hides them: then the poor little glow-worm throws around him his tiny, but beautiful light: you forget his ugliness, if you have seen it; and, if you have not, you cannot believe that he is any thing but a spark of brightness.”

The children were delighted; and their Mamma said, “If the glow-worm were as brilliant by day as he is by night, don’t you think the little hungry birds would soon catch and swallow him up? He remains safe in the shape of an ugly old grub, as you call



it, till the birds are all gone to rest; and then his beauty appears to gratify us without endangering himself. Will not this be a lesson to my children, teaching them not to judge hastily, from outward appearance?"

"Yes, Mamma," answered Ellen, "the glow-worm is like an ugly good man."

"Exactly so, my love. There are many of God's most honoured servants, who, from plainness of person, or awkwardness of manner, from poverty, or want of learning, from natural defect, or some other outward disadvantage, are apt, like their blessed Master, to be 'despised and rejected of men.' Such people, when all is bright about us, and the gay forms and pleasant things of the world court our eyes, may move before us in native lowliness—not seeking our notice, nor sought out by us—spoken of, too, contemptuously, as you spoke of the old grub; and considered almost as a blemish in society. But let the night of sorrow come, let sickness, pain, or any affliction cover the gay scenes of earth with a dark cloud, so that we look around in vain for something to delight us amongst all



that we prized before—then the humble Christian shines alone in the gloom. He has light in his soul, the light of God's love, and the knowledge of His glory, and the sure hope of eternal life. Oh! it is sweet to behold such a one, fully staid upon his God, and therefore kept in perfect peace, seeking not the praise of men, but letting his light so shine before them, that they may glorify the hand which kindled it. I often think, when walking abroad, at night, where these little creatures abound, that they are scattered there to keep up the sweet lesson which we are told to learn from the birds of the air, and the lilies of the field. While "the heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament shewing his handy work,"—while, above our heads, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge," the earth beneath our feet is never without some witness to His power, His wisdom, and His love. The glow-worm, reposing under its little canopy of humble leaves, or glittering in the dewy grass, is no less the work of God's creative hand, and the



object of his providential care, than those mighty orbs which we call stars and planets, and which, at such immense distance, are sparkling in the sky, and rolling along in their appointed course. All speak the praise of Him by whom the worlds were made, even Jesus the Son of God, who died for us, and of whose compassionate love to poor sinners we ought to be reminded by every object that we look upon. He who gives the sun its brightness, lights up also the little spark of the glow-worm. He who humbleth himself to behold the things that are done in heaven, taketh thought for the meanest insect upon earth.

The Lord hath writ His glorious name

Where'er we cast our eye ;

It shines where, bright in distant flame,

The stars bestud the sky.

It sparkles in the morning dew ;

'Tis painted on the flower ;

It glows upon the lovely hue

That gilds the sunset hour.

The cricket's chirp, the lion's roar,

Alike His praise declare ;



'Tis thunder'd on the sea-beat shore,  
Whisper'd in summer air.

But all we see, around, above,  
No lesson can impart,  
Unless the story of His love  
Be written on our heart.

And while earth's many tribes combine  
Their thankful songs to raise,  
Oh, may He ope our lips to join  
That chorus of his praise !



# ANNE BELL ;

OR

## THE FAULTS.

---

“ AH ! butterfly, pretty butterfly ! let me catch you,” said Anne, as she ran after a very beautiful little red one, that was sporting over a bed of flowers.

But the butterfly did not choose to be caught ; it often rested, as if to invite the child’s approach, then, as soon as she stretched out her hand, away it flew, leaving her farther off than ever.

Still Anne followed ; at last it alighted on a rose, and seemed inclined to make a long visit, for it folded its pretty soft wings, and was very quiet. “ Now, butterfly, stay a minute, and I shall have you,” said Anne,



as she drew near with great caution. She struck her hand quickly down, but missed the flower, and was sadly scratched by the thorn, while the insect flew merrily off, unhurt.

Anne was now quite angry. "Ah naughty butterfly! if I can but catch you, I will make you pay for all this."

She ran on, keeping close to the object of her pursuit, until it settled itself on some long tangled grass.

"Now I *will* have you!" exclaimed the child, as she pounced upon it with outstretched hands. The butterfly was caught, and so was Anne, for in her eagerness she lost her footing, fell head foremost, and was severely stung by some nettles, that grew here and there among the grass.

Her crying brought her mamma from the parlour, where she was writing. Mrs. Bell lifted up her little girl, and, seeing how her face was marked, said, "Oh! Anne, how did you get this fall?"

Anne did not like to tell: she knew how very often her mamma had checked the cruel



sport of catching insects. She therefore said nothing, but continued crying.

Mrs. Bell, seeing her hand clenched, opened it; and there, crushed to death, was the pretty red butterfly. "So," said she, gravely, "I now know whose fault it was."

"It was the butterfly's fault, mamma, for leading me such a chase; and the gardener's fault, for leaving those nasty nettles near the walks."

"If you can prove," said her mother, "that the butterfly insisted on your catching it, or that you were obliged to tumble into the long wild grass, I may partly agree with you; but at present I think little Anne Bell is the person to blame; and that the many faults which led to this disaster, well deserve the punishment they have brought."

"As if a butterfly was of any value!" said Anne, "and I am so hurt:" then she cried louder than before.

"This is making the matter worse," observed her mamma—"Come in: I will apply something to relieve the pain; and then talk to you about your morning's amusement."



Anne flung the dead insect away, and sullenly followed.

Mrs. Bell bathed the swollen face of her child with a lotion that abated the smart; and then seated her on the sofa at her side.

“Now, Anne, how many faults did you commit in this business?”

Anne was silent.

“Answer me,” said her mother.

“I suppose it was a fault to do what you bade me not to do, mamma.”

“Yes, that was disobedience: then you chose a time when you knew I was engaged, and could not observe you—there was deceit. Reckon as I go on.”

Anne counted two on her fingers, and looked much humbled.

“Wanton cruelty, Anne, is a sad, a very sad thing indeed; and passion is another fault.”

“Then I have committed four faults, mamma.”

“More than that—you were not only unwilling to confess the matter, but, when discovered, threw the blame elsewhere, which



shewed that you were hardened against the chastisement you received : then you despised God's work, saying a butterfly was of no value ; and were quite sullen and resentful, because I did not suffer my pity for your pain to blind me to the greatness of your offence."

" Oh ! mamma," interrupted Anne, crying, " don't reckon any more, I am frightened to think how bad I have been—pray forget my faults."

" Anne," replied her mother, " I am happy that you now perceive them : at first you would scarcely allow that you had been to blame. But I have only shewn you the faults of which you were guilty within a few short minutes. Look into your heart, my child, and you will discover many other offences, daily and hourly committed : and what will it avail you that I should forget them, if the Almighty God, who knows all you do, and say, and think, should keep these faults in remembrance ?"

Anne sighed deeply, and said, " What shall I do, mamma ?"



“Beseech your heavenly Father to blot them from His book, through the blood of Him who was called Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins.”

Anne knelt down, and implored forgiveness in the name of her Saviour, her mother adding a petition that the Lord would create in her a new, a contrite, and merciful heart.

“I am afraid, mamma, you think me very cruel,” said Anne, after she rose up, “but indeed it was not that made me hurt the butterfly: I only wanted to look at it.”

“Could you not do so as it rested on the flowers?”

“Yes, mamma, but—but—it amused me to run after it.”

“And that was cruelty,” said Mrs. Bell, “distressing a harmless creature for your diversion. It was presumption, too: He who made you to run about, also formed this insect to fly about. The same sun warmed you both; the same air refreshed you; nay, the birds and insects are more immediately God’s care, as they have nobody to feed and provide for them like you.”



“ Do you think He cared for the butterfly, mamma ?”

“ Undoubtedly—his tender mercies are over all His works : it is said, ‘ Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.’ Our blessed Lord declares that a sparrow falleth not to the ground without His permission ; and directs our attention to the care the Almighty takes of his helpless creatures. I am quite sure that the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of cruelty cannot dwell in the same breast.”

“ But what did you mean by my despising God’s work, mamma ?”

“ We have no right to say of any thing which it has pleased God to make, that it is of no value : and in all the creation, probably, there is not a more beautiful object than the butterfly. I am sure none ever led me to such serious and profitable thoughts.”

“ How so, mamma ?”

“ First, as I spoke of its beauty, let me tell you, that if I was to shew you, in a microscope, even the speck of dust that still cleaves to your hand, you would be aston-



ished to find it composed of the most lovely feathers, richer than those of the peacock or the pheasant. Then the little delicate fibres that stretch along its wings, the beautiful regularity of every part, and the manner in which it is enabled to move so quickly through the air, would delight you. But, above all, when I think on what a butterfly was, and what it is, the change fills my whole heart with that great event of which it is the type or representation."

"What event, mamma?"

"The resurrection of the body. You know, Anne, that the first form in which the insect appears is that of a worm,—a creature bred in the earth, and unable to rise above it. Such creatures as you and I, Anne, who are formed out of dust, and must return to it again; and who find ourselves little disposed, and less able, to rise to the contemplation of heavenly things—chasing some fancied pleasure, as you did the poor butterfly to-day, continually offending God in our eagerness after perishing enjoyments, that bring only bitterness and pain at the last.



Like the caterpillar, we eat up the fruits of the earth, and often with as little sense of thankfulness to Him who gives them."

"But this is very sad, mamma—how can the thought of it afford you pleasure?"

"My pleasure arises from considering the wonderful power of God displayed in the insect, and leading me to His promise of changing our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

"The worm, having surrounded itself with a sort of shell, remains enclosed, like a corpse in the tomb, without life or motion: after a time, the shell breaks, and gives liberty to a creature so different from the one which entered it, that I often think the butterfly was made to leave the infidel without excuse, even in the sight of men. When I trace the flight of that beautiful creature through the air, into which it could not possibly lift up itself without such a wondrous change, I am lost in astonishment and adoration of the hand that produced it. I am led



to say, in a deep feeling of my present state, 'My soul cleaveth to the dust : quicken thou me, according to thy word.' And my spirit rises into those regions of life, and light, and joy, into which I hope, by the sufferings and merits of my glorious Redeemer, to be admitted at the close of my pilgrimage on earth."

"Oh ! mamma," exclaimed Anne, in tears, "how sorry I am, that I killed the butterfly."

"To kill or to hurt any thing without sufficient cause, my dear, is very sinful—very far removed from like-mindedness to Christ Jesus. You have sadly experienced to-day, that in your heart lurk the seeds of disobedience, passion, pride, cruelty, deceit, and indifference to the glory of your Creator in His works. The flight of a butterfly across your path, has called all these evil dispositions into action in a moment. Oh ! my child, what must these hearts be in the sight of Him who is perfect righteousness and purity ! What need we have, daily, hourly, to implore the aid of the Holy Spirit, to cleanse and to sanctify us, who cannot



make our own hearts clean ! and how should our souls bless the Lord, and all that is within us bless the holy name of Him, through whom alone we escape eternal death—who hath redeemed us to God by His blood, and made the believer an heir of everlasting life !”

### HYMN.

Glory to Him who made the world ;

Whose hand its flowery garment wove ;  
And o'er its rolling orb unfurl'd,

• The banner of eternal love ;  
And brought from dust the various race  
Of living forms that crowd its space.

Glory to Him, whose care upholds,

The works his wondrous skill hath wrought  
Whose arm, each helpless form enfolds,

Whose wisdom hath a lesson taught,  
Ev'n in the worm that crawls along,  
The meanest of the reptile throng.

Glory to Him whose power shall raise,

The forms of men, that sleep in earth ;  
And give, to His eternal praise,

The splendours of a heavenly birth,  
Bidding us burst the tomb, and soar

Where sin and death are known no more !



## THE ROSE-BUD.

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SIT down, Louisa, under this pleasant shade; and listen to the story which I am about to tell you. The honeysuckle, while it defends us from the sun's rays, is so beautiful to the sight, and so fragrant to the smell, that we scarcely know whether to admire it more for its loveliness, or prize it for its use. It is thus with most of God's works, if we should but lay to heart the sweet lessons that they can teach us. But the history which you are now to hear, is not of a honeysuckle. A rose-bud is the theme.

I don't know how many years it is since I planted the slip from a very fine tree, growing in a friend's garden. It was a rich deep red, or rather crimson, damask rose. The



petals were soft as velvet, with a most delicate gloss: in short, the flower was so exceedingly beautiful, that I could not rest until I had, as I thought, secured such a tree to myself. I took off the slip in autumn, and placed it under shelter during the winter. Early in spring, I found that it had become strongly rooted, and then I transplanted it to the most favourite spot in my garden, taking up several valuable shrubs to make room for my rose, my precious rose-bush!

Many and frequent were my visits to the spot; and the little plant flourished to my satisfaction. Leaf after leaf came peeping forth, and unfolding its soft green upon the slender shoots. At last, to my very great joy, I was able to distinguish amongst them a little hard knot, which I knew would produce a bud—there was but one: and if there had been no other rose-bud in the kingdom, I could scarcely have treasured it more proudly, or set a higher value upon it.

I know what makes my little girl smile: my lecture yesterday, on the folly and danger of giving our hearts to earthly objects, seems



to have been rather different from my practice in this instance. But I told you it was many years ago; and experience has since taught me what I shall be very glad to see you learning in earlier life, my Louisa.

Well—the bud grew: and what with fine weather, and my tender care of it, there seemed to be every prospect of its becoming as grand a rose as any in my friend's garden. My impatience to see it unfold its beauteous leaves was very great; and I well remember the joy with which I first discovered a little blush of red in the centre of its soft green covering. If I had watched as anxiously for the budding of divine grace in my own soul, what happiness I might have enjoyed! but my heart was then set upon earthly things; and I grasped at the gifts of God, in creation and providence, without ever asking myself what fruit He expected in me. Had my rose-bush put forth neither leaves nor blossoms, I should have flung it away, and made choice of another: but, though I was myself as a dead plant in the garden of the visible church, I never reflected how justly



the same sentence might have passed upon me.

It was now the beginning of June: on every side the sweetest flowers were opening, and their charming colours invited my eye. Delicate pinks and bright carnations; rich double wall-flowers and purple stocks; tall fair lilies, and superb convolvulus, with the star-like jasmine, and honeysuckle as bright as that over our heads, all put forth their sweets in vain. The humble mignonette threw its delightful breath around my path, and the cheerful-looking little heart's-ease spread out a bordering carpet of blue and gold. Nay, even a moss blush rose was in full beauty, close beside; but all were disregarded; while I waited with fretful anxiety to see my expected damask flower expand, and reign king over the garden.

Alas, poor, foolish, thankless mortals! How heedlessly we pass by a thousand blessings which our God scatters about us, on the right hand and on the left, while our eyes and our hearts, our longings and our hopes, are fixed on some one perishing toy, which



His wisdom sees good to withhold from us !

Still, all eager for the welfare of my damask rose, I took up, and threw away whatever root grew too near it. Some which I had planted the year before, and which would not flower till this their second summer, I now regarded as quite worthless, compared with the important rose ; and I tore up their tender fibres, either tossing them quite out of the garden, or carelessly putting them in some distant bed. Some magnificent tiger lilies, in particular, were thus destroyed, lest their lofty heads should come between the sun-beams and my rose—my precious damask rose-bud !

You smile, Louisa ; and at this moment so do I, at the recollection of my childish folly ; but, if we considered it rightly, we should find in it rather a matter for lamentation. The time so lost, upon one trivial object, never can be recalled : the diligence bestowed upon it was robbery of Him whose we are, and whom we ought to serve. I do not mean that we may not, even with profit to ourselves, enjoy the sweets of His crea-



tive bounty, in the lovely works that surround us here, in a garden : but in all cases we must use the world as not abusing it : and inordinate affection is always a sort of idolatry, highly displeasing in the sight of God. Beside, in thus extravagantly prizing one possession, we are guilty of despising others : and the destruction of my tiger lilies was but a type of that unjust love of novelty, which discards old friends for new, and neglects a present privilege while looking forward to one still distant and uncertain.

But listen to the end of my story. The bud swelled to its full size ; and for several evenings I expected that the following morning would shew it expanded into a bright round flower. It still remained the same, excepting that a sickly yellowish cast stole over the green leaves that enfolded it ; and it became contracted a little on one side. The rich crimson of its head grew pale ; it was soft to the touch, and all my unwillingness to believe it, could not hide the truth that my hopes would be blighted. At last it



hung down, so shrivelled and dried up, that I could no longer doubt its fate. I plucked it from the stem, and broke it open. The canker was within; and my damask rose-bud was scattered to the winds in fragments.

This lesson, Louisa, was not much heeded at the time: I thought but of the loss, not of the gain that it might be to me: but I have since very often thought of my damask rose-bud, and found much to meditate upon.

The canker is a disease which takes hold of the flower at a very early period, but does not shew itself until it has eaten away the principle of life in the bud. How often does secret discontent, a bad temper, or an evil inclination, prey upon the beauty of the Christian character, destroy its promise in this life, and perhaps devour its hope for the life to come! I watch you closely, my dear child, with feelings of far deeper interest than those with which I have watched my rose-bud; for I desire to present you to the Lord, without spot or blemish, and there are many dangers both without and within to keep my anxiety awake. Satan, as a rag-



ing lion, would break in and trample you down, if not fenced around by Him who is able to keep all that we commit unto Him. When I see you surrounded by prosperity, smiling in thoughtless joy, and with no trouble to cloud your mind, I sometimes tremble lest such summer rays should scorch my bud. For in seasons of great ease, the heart is often lifted up, and forgets its God. When sickness, or the little disappointments that even childhood must know, make you fretful, I fear that you should be blown from the safe shelter, where I would have you always lying still, at the Saviour's feet. The friendship of the world, and its pleasures, are like insects that creep over the leaf, secretly devouring, and defiling where they pass. Ingratitude is a blight, and pride is a canker that lies deep—so deep as often not to be seen by the eye of man—and works at the very life of the soul.

There was once a perfect flower on earth ; an undefiled one, which, exposed to every enemy that could possibly rise up against us, conquered them all by suffering their rage,



and then went to bloom for ever in a most glorious place. "The Rose of Sharon" was the name of this bright flower; a plant of renown. He grew up "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." Isaiah liii. 2. For His mortal birth was obscure, and His dwelling was in the habitations of poverty. The world smiled not upon Him—it said, "He hath no form or comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him," for in the beauty of holiness, the world sees nothing desirable; and though "praise is comely for the upright," a crooked and perverse generation call it weariness. This Rose of Sharon drooped under many a storm, and was wounded and torn by those whom He came to enlighten and to bless. The thorns were about His head, and their points were turned in to pierce Him, that we might escape torment. Such little helpless buds as my Louisa, cannot study too often the history of the Rose, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they must be like upon earth, if they would blossom in the heavenly garden, where



all His glories and beauties are now expanded. We cannot love Him too much : we cannot rise too early to seek after Him, nor visit Him too often in prayer and praise. We cannot be too anxious to root up every thing that would prevent His spreading in our hearts ; nor ought we to rest, till He reigns there in every affection, pleasure, and hope. Many beautiful things surround us, for which we are bound to return continual thanks to God ; but He is “a chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.” More welcome than the snow-drop, He appears in the wintry season of sorrow, to tell us that there is yet life in the world, and brighter days will come. More sweet than the violet, He invites us to search for Him in retirement, and overpays us a thousand fold by His beauty and fragrance. More pure than the lilly of the valley, He is found among lowly shrubs ; and if the rich and great receive Him, he shews the loveliness of humility, and puts pride to shame. More fruitful than the vine, He overspreads the land that owns Him with rich clusters ; and says to His



branches, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Nay, He is more precious than the tree of life in paradise, for to Him no flaming sword forbids the approach: but in the voice of tenderest invitation, He bids us draw nigh, and proclaims, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

Childhood, like a budding rose,  
In the world's wide garden grows;  
But how often hateful sin,  
Like a canker dwells within;  
All unseen by mortal eyes,  
While the Rose-bud droops and dies.

Men behold the outward deed,  
God the inward thought can read:  
From our God we cannot hide,  
Envy, anger, secret pride.  
Clear as in the noon-day sun,  
God can read them every one.

To the Saviour let us pray—  
Lord, these cankers take away!

Let thy Spirit dwell within,  
Guarding us from every sin,

'Till, gathered by thy tender hand,  
All thy buds in heaven expand.



## THE BIBLE

### THE BEST BOOK.

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THOMAS and his sister had been busily employed all the morning at their lessons. Ellen finished her piece of sewing just as her brother began the last line in his copy ; and by the time that her little work-box was neatly put up in its place, Thomas had wiped his pen, exclaiming, "There! now business is done, and as it rains so fast, we are sure of a nice story from Mamma."

To Mamma they went; and having satisfied her that their tasks were indeed properly done, claimed the reward. "What story shall it be?" said Mamma, "Oh, a pretty history out of the Bible, if you please, Mamma," replied Ellen. "Yes," said Thomas,



“there are many beautiful histories in the Bible. I do love it best of all books, for the sweet histories that are in it. I am never tired of hearing about Moses and Joshua, how they led the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan ; or of David, how he killed Goliath, and fled from Saul, and how he became king. And then about naughty Absalom, and wise Solomon, and Samuel, the little Priest. Oh, there is no book like the Bible!” “So I say too,” added Ellen ; “Hagar and Ishmael—what a pretty thing that is, when the angel of the Lord shewed the fountain of water to save the child from dying ; and then about Miriam hiding herself, to watch what would become of her little baby brother, in his ark of bulrushes ; and the history of gentle Ruth, and Queen Esther, who saved the poor Jews from death. But, Mamma has got the Bible open, so let us listen now, Thomas, and talk afterwards.”

The children seated themselves upon two little stools near their mother, and with smiling looks, waited for her to begin. But she had something to say to them first.



“ My dear children seem quite agreed that the Bible is the best book.” “ Oh yes, Mamma, and it is ; is it not ? ” they both cried out.

“ Surely, my dears. All that man’s wisdom and taste can produce, is far more inferior to the words of this blessed book, than yonder scrap of red paper is to the rich and fragrant roses blowing in the garden.” The children looked delighted. Mamma went on.

— “ Still, I am afraid that you may injure yourselves, and indeed commit sin, by thinking too much of the amusement that you find in the Bible.” “ Too much, Mamma ! ”

“ Yes ; thinking so much of the amusement as to make you forget or disregard the instruction that it is intended to convey to our souls. There is in the Bible no idle word. It is a message from the most high God to His sinful, ignorant creatures, given to teach them what is His holy will ; and the beautiful histories which you delight in, form a part of this lesson. In the histories that you have named, and all others, we are shewn examples, whether of piety or wickedness,



‘profitable,’ as St. Paul tells us, ‘for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;’ and the object is, ‘that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’ When we overlook this, we not only do wrong, but acquire a habit of trifling with holy things, and, ‘pierce ourselves through with many sorrows,’ by neglecting to use the means which God has given, in the manner that He has commanded.” “I believe, Mamma,” said Thomas, “that I often do this. I am forgetting every thing but the pleasure of the story.”

“I do not,” said Ellen; “I see the hand of God all along, and think of His wonderful providence.”

“I am glad you do so,” replied her Mamma, “but you must observe many other things besides the providential government of God. All the parables in the New Testament, as you well know, are given to teach us our duty as Christians, and many of them are explained by our blessed Lord himself.”

“Yes, Mamma,” said Thomas; “but we



were speaking of the Old Testament histories now."

"In those histories, my dear, we have a constant lesson; and there is not one of them that does not point to the Saviour who was to come, or to duties, privileges and promises of the Gospel. When we read them, we must bear in mind the sin of Adam, and the curse which fell upon the human race, and upon the earth itself, in consequence of that sin. We must remember that man can find no favour in God's sight, nor hope to escape everlasting death, excepting through the promised Saviour, 'Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.' We must also remember, that the sinners redeemed by Him, become, 'a peculiar people, zealous of good works;' and that, although, 'we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God,' yet, to those who believe, exceeding great and precious promises are given of such strength and support as they need. They find God a refuge, 'a very present help in trouble;' when their heart and their flesh fail, they find Him the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever.



“How beautifully does this appear in the whole history of David! You delight in hearing how the lovely shepherd youth met the boasting Philistine giant, and slew him with a pebble, so delivering not only himself, but the vast armies of Israel. In this, my dear children, David is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, meeting and vanquishing Satan, our terrible foe; and purchasing deliverance for us. David is also here a type of each humble Christian, who, having made the Lord of Hosts his only hope and strength, meets and conquers those who would destroy his soul, as it is written, ‘Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.’ Do you always recollect these things, when listening to the best of all books, the Bible!”

“Indeed Mamma,” said Ellen, “I do not. It is true that I often say to myself, ‘how wonderfully God delivers his people out of their dangers!’ but I do not think so much about our Saviour, as it seems I ought to do.”

“Alas, my child! how can such as we, dare at all to think upon the Holy Lord God, or take His name into our mouths, unless at



the same time we regard Him as our reconciled Father through Jesus Christ? So awfully pure and holy is the Most High, that He is a consuming fire to all out of Christ. Every blessing, every comfort, every hope that we enjoy—health and strength, the use of our limbs and our senses, safety by day, repose at night, food and raiment—all, all are the purchase of our Redeemer's blood. He says, 'All power is given unto me in heaven, and on earth.' How mercifully that power is used, let our lips confess, while our souls bless the Lord."

"If we always thought of this, sister," said Thomas, "every thing that we read in the Bible would make us love Jesus Christ more and more." "It ought to do so," replied his Mamma, "but our ungrateful hearts are so ready to forget His benefits, and so little inclined for His service, that I fear you do not always pray for the help of the Holy Spirit, although He is given to take of the things of Christ, and shew them unto us—to bring all things to our remembrance—and to lead us into all truth. Our Lord says,



‘Search the Scriptures,’ ‘they are they which testify of me.’ It is He ‘of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write.’ ‘To Him give all the prophets witness.’

“Our blessed Lord is sometimes spoken of in the Old Testament under the name of an angel. Jacob thus prays, ‘God, before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, did walk, the God which led me all my life long unto this day; the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.’ You take great pleasure in hearing the delightful history of Israel’s deliverance out of Egypt, and how the Lord led them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan. Do you remember that an angel went before them?”

“Yes, Mamma, and they were told not to provoke Him.”

“True, my dears: Jehovah said, ‘My name is in Him;’ and this angel had power to forgive sins, or not to forgive them. ‘Who can forgive sins but God alone?’”

“The Jews said that, Mamma.”

“Yes, Ellen; and the Jews were right.



They heard Jesus Christ declare to the sick man that his sins were forgiven; and they saw a miracle performed to prove that he had 'power upon earth to forgive sins.' This should have convinced them that He was indeed 'God manifest in the flesh,' but their hard and unbelieving hearts would not allow it. Seeing they did not perceive, and hearing they could not understand. Shall we be like those unhappy Jews, shutting our eyes and our ears against the blessed truths that testify of Jesus?"

"Oh no, Mamma, I hope not," said Thomas very earnestly, and Ellen said the same.

"Then, my children, we must diligently seek in the Bible for what will so strengthen our faith, and assure our hearts; always praying that we be not forgetful hearers but doers of the word. Satan, who opposed the work of our redemption, and even dared to meet and to tempt the Son of God, is always watching to draw off our thoughts from Him, whom to know is eternal life. We may take up the Bible, to be interested by its histories, and delighted by the beau-



tiful language in which they are written, yet seek no real profit from it. We may believe all that is told us of the creation, and even the whole of our Saviour's life, death and resurrection, without being the better or the happier. It is when we look into the Bible as if it was a letter written to us, and every word of it meant for our instruction, that it becomes a light to our feet, shewing us the path to heaven. We must feel ourselves to be poor ruined creatures, and come seeking our only Saviour, Jesus Christ, in every part of the book. They who seek Him early shall find Him.

The children were very thankful to their Mamma for telling them all this; and they listened very attentively, while she read to them the history of Abraham going to sacrifice his son Isaac, in the 22d chapter of Genesis. She also explained to them how beautifully the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was foreshewn in it.

"But Isaac was not slain at last," said Ellen, "and our Lord was."

"Isaac was spared," said her Mamma,



“ through the offering of another in his stead. As the death of the ram saved the life of Isaac’s body, so did the precious blood of Christ deliver Isaac’s soul from the bitter pains of eternal death. ‘ God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,’ and the blessed Jesus was contented to be delivered up, and to die upon the cross, for the sinful children of men. Let us never cease to give honour unto Him who is adored by the angels of heaven, joining with the spirits of just men made perfect; and altogether glorifying Him, and saying, ‘ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.’ ”

When with humble joy I look  
In thy sweet and holy book,  
Blessed Jesus, make me see  
How it testifies of thee!

Thou, the woman’s promis’d seed,  
Cam’st to suffer and to bleed;  
But, in rising from the dead,  
Thou hast bruis’d the serpent’s head.

All along the sacred lines,  
Lord, thy gentle glory shines:  
Abraham thy day could see—  
May his faith be found in me!



Let me walk in holy fear,  
Knowing thou art ever near,  
Never by my heart forgot,  
Though mine eyes behold thee not.

By thy Spirit and thy word,  
Still vouchsafe to guide me, Lord;  
Teach me now to love thy ways,  
And in heaven I'll sing thy praise.

Let us put on our bonnets, Lucy, and give  
your brothers their caps; we will go to the  
farm-yard, and see the young brood of early  
chickens that was hatched a few days ago.  
I know of very few scenes, among the animal  
creation, more interesting or pleasing than  
that which we are going to behold.

I see you are all ready: William may run  
his hoop along the garden walk, and we will  
lead little Frank for the morning dew is  
still moist on the grass, and it would be a  
pity to allow him to wet his feet.

How sweetly the sun shines, while the  
fresh air brings us the scent of many flowers.



THE HEN  
AND HER CHICKENS.

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LET us put on our bonnets, Lucy, and give your brothers their caps; we will go to the farm-yard, and see the young brood of early chickens that was hatched a few days ago. I know of very few scenes, among the animal creation, more interesting or pleasing than that which we are going to behold.

I see you are all ready: William may run his hoop along the smooth walk, and we will lead little Frank, for the morning dew is still moist on the grass, and it would be a pity to allow him to wet his feet.

How sweetly the sun shines, while the fresh air brings us the scent of many blos-



soms from the garden, and the little birds are busily employed, collecting whatever can assist them in making their nests strong, and soft, and warm! They will soon be hatching their young ones, and I know my children will not be so cruel as to rob, or even to disturb them, if they are so confiding as to build within our reach. Oh! it is a sad thing when man, who is appointed to rule the inferior creatures, forgets his duty, and becomes their oppressor. I never knew a person who really loved God, guilty of intentional cruelty to any creature He has been pleased to form.

Here is a bush of sweet brier, just come into bloom; you may gather a small sprig of it, but be careful; the thorns are many and sharp, though you can hardly see them, for the abundance of the leaves. It is so with most of the earthly pleasures we delight in my children. The Lord has, indeed, given us liberally all things to enjoy, but we must be moderate and cautious in using them, or we shall find our too great eagerness after worldly blessings become hurtful, and perhaps we shall pierce ourselves through with many



sorrows in pursuing them. When I look at the sweet brier, I would think of our compassionate Saviour, who was wounded by such bitter thorns, that we might partake in the favour of God's love for ever.

Now, William, open the gate. So, Mrs. Hen, you are strutting about, I see, in the midst of your chickens, very proud of them. Softly, Frank! Do not attempt to catch the chickens; observe how the mother ruffles her feathers, how loudly she threatens you, while running with her beak stretched out, to defend her darlings. Now she calls them, and they have taken shelter under her. Stand quiet a moment, and let us consider this sight.

Do you remember, Lucy, about a month since, complaining of this very hen, that she was so fearful and shy, you never could persuade her to feed near you, as the other fowls did, laying her feathers flat, from cowardice, till she seemed so small, and she would run away, as if you had been inclined to hurt her? Look, now, at her eye; how boldly she fixes it upon you, watching every motion, and ready to fly in your face if you go near her,



What a change! The Scriptures tell us that "love is strong as death," and here we have an impressive instance of it. No kind of danger, as I think, would now drive this hen to flight, or induce her, for a moment, to forsake her chickens. Who taught her this? The eggs she sat on were, probably, very few of them her own: we put them in a basket as they came to hand, and left her to hatch them. From that day nothing could tempt her to leave the nest. The sun might shine brightly, and the other fowls run cackling when called to be fed; she saw and heard it all, but never staid away from the eggs longer than to take one hasty meal every morning, and just to smooth her pretty ruffled feathers.

Day after day, for three long weeks, she denied herself every enjoyment, sitting on these eggs, and losing all care for her own comfort in the steady performance of her duty. But, while we admire this constancy in the hen, we must not forget the lesson that she seems to teach us, and which we very much need to learn; let us ask ourselves,



my dear children, if *we* are ready to bear for the sake of Him who died for us, such privations as this poor, simple fowl cheerfully bore for her chickens? Alas! I fear, not for one day. How much need we have to look continually for the help of the Holy Spirit, that we may learn to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow Christ!

Lucy, you may now scatter some of the barley which you have brought. See, how anxiously the fond mother directs her little brood to the grains that seem best for them! She pecks at one, and calls over it, and observes while they snatch it up. She must be hungry, I am sure; but how little she cares for her own wants till theirs are satisfied! What a lesson of disinterested love is here! What a beautiful display of Divine power, in a creature not even gifted with reason, but obeying, like a machine, the instinct implanted by the Most High! "Marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!"

Here come the other fowls, at full speed: they knew by your voice that you were calling the hen to feed. With what a jealous



eye she watches them! That fine cock, with his grand feathers and proud strut, is very spiteful sometimes against young chickens: it is not always that the prettiest creature is the most valuable. Mind, William, he looks angry: oh! he is running after the poor chickens! but see, all are sheltered, in a moment, beneath the wings of the hen, and, bold as he is, he dares not to touch them.

Who would think that a few soft downy feathers would be such a defence for so many little living creatures like those? But God has made every thing to answer the end for which he designed it. Do you remember that beautiful Psalm, the Ninety-first, which describes the Divine love and protection, in terms taken, I think, from such a scene as this? "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty;" "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." We must look at such an object as this to understand the force of those words: we must see how *very* safe the chickens are, so long as the hen is not removed or injured;



and then, recollecting that our God cannot change, cannot fail his people, let us rejoice in our unbounded security: unbounded indeed it is, while we continue to make him our refuge; but, my children, how prone we are to leave that place of perfect safety, and wander about in a dangerous world without Him! If, when the cock ran after the little chickens, one of them had refused to take shelter under its mother's wing, and attempted to defend itself, you would hardly have pitied its fate, so wilfully brought on: yet, whenever you dare to neglect praying to God, when you run into temptation, or remain in evil company, or look for safety to any thing but Him, you commit the same folly, and a great sin; exposing yourselves to the danger of much worse misfortune, and eternal punishment.

You see how anxious the hen is to collect her little ones under her feathers, as well knowing they cannot be safe any where else. Does not this remind you of our Lord's tender and sorrowful address to Jerusalem? "How often would I have gathered thy chil-



dren together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Many terrible judgments, even utter destruction, overtook that rebellious people. They would not be gathered by the Lord Jesus, who came to seek and to save that which was lost: they would not receive him as their Saviour, nor acknowledge him for their King, and they were delivered into the hands of those who had no pity. May we fear, lest the same condemnation should come upon us, as it surely will, if we neglect so great salvation.

Can you look at that poor, feeble fowl, and behold her courage, her fortitude, her contempt of danger in the discharge of her duty, and yet doubt that, weak as we are, we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us?

We will now return home, and let us pray that the lesson here given may not be in vain. Learn submission to your parents, as the little chickens obey every note of their mother. Learn not to trust your own wisdom or strength, but be guided by the counsel of



God, who teaches the simple fowls of the air. Learn patience, self-denial, and steadfastness in a good cause ; and, above all, learn what would be your wretched state, now and for ever, if you had not a sure refuge to flee unto in all times of danger and distress, in Him whose love is everlasting as his power is infinite ; who openeth His hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness ; feeding you with the bread of life, and inviting you to draw water out of the wells of salvation. For, “He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.”

Holy Saviour, mighty King,  
O'er me spread thy guardian wing ;  
When by trembling fears distress'd,  
Let me fly to thee, and rest.

Call me, keep me, by thy side,  
Teach me there alone to hide ;  
Where, for safety, should I flee,  
If my footsteps strayed from thee?

Warn me with thy gentle voice,  
Point my path, and guide my choice ;  
Let me, Lord, in thee possess  
Wisdom, peace, and righteousness.



THE  
HATED TASK.

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“It is very provoking!” said Harriet to herself, as she slowly unfolded her work, and prepared to begin a long piece of hemming; while her mamma was engaged in executing some needful work, at another table. Harriet began her task; still talking to herself “Yes, it is provoking, and out of all reason, that I must sit here so long, doing what any poor child in the parish school would gladly do for me, and even three times as much to earn a half-penny. And all the while the sun is shining, and the air so pleasant; most of the ragged children in the village are out at play now, I dare say; and I, a young lady must be kept slaving here, only because



I am a young lady, and can afford to pass my time as I like best. It is very provoking!"

When people feel ill tempered and discontented, they generally look sulky. Harriet's mamma soon saw that something was wrong with her little girl, who sat very awkwardly upon her seat, with her feet turned in, and her head poked out, and her shoulders a great deal higher than they needed to be. Her mamma found fault with her, and desired that she would sit upright: but though Harriet dared not to disobey, she looked more sulky than before, and worked so very slowly, that at length her mamma told her she must not leave off until she had hemmed a whole side of the muslin handkerchief, and hemmed it neatly too. Harriet, who intended to do only half that quantity in the time allotted to her, felt still more provoked. The tears rose in her eyes, but they were tears of anger; and still repeating to herself, "was there ever any thing so provoking!" she went on, twitching out her needle with such peevish haste, that she presently snapped the thread.



Her mamma observed all this, but said nothing. She finished her own employment, and then began to cut out some work, while Harriet went on as fast as she could; and just as she brought the handkerchief for her mamma to look at, a smart shower began to fall.

“There, there!” exclaimed Harriet, “I knew it would be so.”

“How did you know it?” said her mamma.

“Oh, I knew the sun would shine as long as I was cooped up here at my task, and that it would rain when I was ready to go out.”

“Harriet, I am ashamed of you.”

“But it is so provoking, mamma.”

“I fear it is:” said her mamma, “I fear you are provoking the Lord.”

“I mean mamma, that it provokes me.”

“Does it provoke you to see this refreshing shower fall on the dry and thirsty ground?”

“Why no, mamma, not that exactly; but every thing”——

“I am sorry to hear you speak so, Har-



riety; and very sorry too I was to see with what sullen looks, and improper manner you went through your whole task of sewing. I have given you time to recollect yourself; and now I expect to know what was the cause of such unbecoming behaviour."

"Well, certainly mamma, I did feel vexed at being obliged to sit at work, while the sun was shining, and I might have been enjoying a nice run in the garden."

"Then you would never study but in bad weather, I suppose?" said her mamma.

"Yes, I would study, but not often work. You know mamma, one must be able to read and to write, and know something of what other people know, or one would be laughed at. But as for hemming and sewing, so long as I have learned it, I cannot see the use of sitting for an hour at a time over a handkerchief, which any body else could hem as well as I: and it is such charity to send all the work we can to the schools, mamma!"

Harriet's mother had been much grieved, by her little girl's looks and manner that morning; and to hear her talk in such a way



made her yet more uncomfortable. She looked very grave, and said, "I am much surprised and distressed at what you say, Harriet; but I hope to convince you how very wrong you are. It seems that you would be quite satisfied to give up your time and thoughts to whatever is esteemed by the world—the most vain and giddy part of it; and this too, to avoid being laughed at, and, if you spoke truly, for the sake of being admired. Is it not so?"

"To be sure, mamma, I should not like to be thought a dunce."

"But you would have no dislike to being idle and useless. You would be like a tree that bears fine leaves and blossoms, but never produces any fruit—a tree that cumpers the ground, Harriet; and what is to be done with such a tree?"

Harriet knew very well, for she had read the parable of the fig-tree, in the 13th chapter of St. Luke's gospel; but she did not answer.

"I see you understand me," said her mamma, "and I hope the Lord will make



you understand too, how great is the evil, the sin, of idleness. The unfruitful tree will be cut down: the unprofitable servant will be cast into outer darkness."

"But, mamma, I am such a child. When I am a woman I shall find plenty to do, and be very useful I hope. What good will come of my sitting here, to hem a handkerchief?"

"What good, Harriet! is it not written, 'train up a child in the way wherein he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' You consider it hard to give up an hour's amusement in the sunshine for the purpose of a little sewing: but even if your work was in itself of no consequence, still the habits of industry, diligence, and self-denial, acquired in childhood, prove a blessing through life; and those who put off being useful until they grow up, will find it more difficult to become so then, than to pull down a house, and build another in its place.

"How pleased you were, Harriet, when I shewed you the print of a school, where poor little Hindoo girls are instructed by ladies, from England and America."



“ Oh, yes mamma, that is delightful. You know I love the schools, and pray for them, and subscribe to them too.”

“ But what would become of the schools, if there were no teachers ?”

“ Then there would be no schools, mamma.”

“ And there would be no teachers, Harriet, if all our ladies were brought up according to your plan. The little girl who, for the purpose of hemming a handkerchief, will not spare one hour from her selfish amusements, is not likely, when a woman, to devote her time and her talents to instruct others, in what she herself despises, neither will she be the person to sacrifice her own ease and comfort, much less to endanger her health and life, for the sake of people whom she never saw. The very schools at home, to which you think it would be so charitable to send all your work, would not exist if ladies were not found willing to take a great deal of trouble, and make many sacrifices for their benefit.

“ Self indulgence, Harriet, is a miserable



and disgraceful thing; and oh how opposite is it to the character of Him whose example we are commanded to follow! The blessed Jesus pleased not himself. ‘He took upon Him the form of a servant;’ ‘He went about doing good;’ He came ‘not to be ministered unto, but to minister;’ and when appealed to on behalf of a sick servant, his reply was ‘I will come and heal him.’ His apostles, while preaching the Gospel, working miracles, and surrounded by believers, who would gladly have provided them with all things, wrought, working with their own hands, that they should not be chargeable to any. Oh! Harriet, can you think of the blessed Paul, in the midst of all his ‘sufferings, persecutions, afflictions,’ his ‘labours abundant’ in the ministry, his ‘journeyings’ ‘in perils,’ and hunger and cold, and watchings—can you think of him sitting down to earn his daily meal by making tents, and yet murmur at the gentle task which I give you, as a means of leading you to more valuable employments?”

Harriet began to feel very much ashamed



of herself: indeed she had been for a long time quite miserable in her own mind. True peace never can abide with selfishness and idleness. "Mamma," she said, "I will try to be diligent in whatever you desire me to do; and then I shall be happy."

"To make you happy, my dear, your diligence must spring from a right motive: from a desire of filling up the measure of your duties in your state of life, so as best to perform the will of God, and to promote His glory, remembering that whether as a poor child, or, as you call yourself, a young lady, God calls you to be his humble, patient, and faithful servant. You cannot know that He will spare you to a riper age; and life being so very uncertain, you are the more bound to make the very most of every day. I, your parent, give you such tasks as I hope, with the divine blessing, will best prepare you for the active duties of life; and your part is to accept them with prayer to God for that diligence which the Scriptures so highly commend, and with watchfulness against that slothful spirit which they represent as ruinous both to body and soul.



“How I pity those young ladies who, having finished their education, as it is called, find themselves in a state of idleness more wearisome than the most laborious employment. They go lounging about the house or garden, or sit languidly down to some trifling work of fancy, or pore over a silly book, or make gossiping visits among their neighbours, whose affairs they pry into, because they have none of their own worth attending to. St. Paul cautions us against becoming tattlers and busy bodies; but such is the character too generally found among those who despise the quiet scenes of female industry. You should read the last chapter of Proverbs, from 10th verse, Harriet; and see what was the wise king Solomon’s opinion on that subject. But, if we pity the idle girl, because she has no true comfort now, what exceeding grief ought we to feel for her, recollecting that of all these wasted hours, not one is forgotten before God! That duties omitted are sins committed—that her health, strength, senses, the use of her limbs, all her knowledge, and all her



ability, are so many talents which she is hiding in a napkin, and every one of which must witness against her at the last day! They are like the vineyard described in the 5th chapter of Isaiah: ‘He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine; and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes;’ fruit not worth the gathering—Oh, Harriet, this is provoking the Lord!”

“Dear mamma!” said Harriet, while tears stole from her eyes, “pray for me that I may not do thus, I have been more wicked than you can suppose; and the Lord has known all my naughty thoughts. But I will remember the love of Jesus Christ to poor children, and beg of Him to teach and to bless me, and to guide me in the way I should go!”

Come, let us work, while here we stay,  
Work while it is called to-day,  
Before the closing night of death  
Seal our eyes and check our breath.



Earth is not a home for rest,  
So polluted and unblest ;  
Where the Lord reveals his face,  
We'll find a better resting place.

While we lie with folded hands,  
Satan all rejoicing stands.  
Sloth would cast us into sleep,  
Till on our slumbers death should creep.

Jesus toiled when here below,  
And to Him for help we'll go.  
Lord appoint our task, that we  
When 'tis done may rest with Thee.



THE  
**DYING SHEEP.**

“**THERE** is a sheep lying upon the ground,” said little John to his Aunt, “I wonder if it is asleep.”

“No,” replied his Aunt, “it belongs to the flock which you see proceeding along the road. Either from fatigue, or some hurt, the poor creature was unable to go on, and has fallen upon that plot of grass by the way side, where it lies distressed and panting for breath.”

“What will become of it Aunt? shall we take it home, and feed it, and try if it will get well again?”

Before his Aunt could answer him, John



saw another flock of sheep coming down the road; and the man who followed them went up to the poor animal on the grass, and struck it with his whip. The sheep got up and endeavoured to run away, and succeeded in getting under some shrubs that grew at a little distance. The man then called his dog, which followed the sheep, and drove it from its shelter, and pursued it, barking and even biting, as the poor creature resisted. Presently the sheep fell down, and was dragged along by the man for some paces; but as neither threats nor blows would compel it to rise, the man was obliged to leave it there, and calling off his dog, they drove on their flock.

“There, Aunt,” said John reproachfully, “if we had taken the poor sheep, it would not have been treated so cruelly.”

“We had no right to remove it, my dear. The man who last came up, no doubt intended to restore it to the other, whom you may see waiting on the top of the hill. I think the sheep is dead: we will go and look at it.”

They did so; and found the animal alive,



but unable to move. It lay upon its side, its neck stretched out, its mouth open, and the film gathering on its eyes. Little John lifted its head, which immediately fell again, "Leave it alone, my dear," said his Aunt, "its sufferings will soon be at an end."

While they stood looking at the dying creature, a man approached on horseback, and went up to the sheep, which he struck with a small whip; but the poor animal could only utter a very faint cry. "What did you do that for?" said John reproachfully, "I've bought the carcase, young master," replied the man, "and I suppose I may do what I like with it."

He then proceeded to drag it by the legs; and calling to a boy who was passing, they lifted the sheep, now in the agonies of death, and flung it rudely across the horse's back; after which the man mounted his horse and trotted away.

John and his Aunt had walked to some distance before either of them spoke: at length John said, "I am determined on one thing at any rate: I will never be cruel."



“ I hope you never will be so, my dear child,” answered his Aunt, “ but remember that you cannot keep this, or any other good resolution, unless God gives you his grace, which you must ask in constant prayer.”

“ I know that, Aunt ; but I don’t think I could be cruel if I tried. What pleasure can there be in giving pain to others ? it is not only wicked, but mean and cowardly. O what bad hearts those two men must have, who tortured the poor sheep in such a way !”

“ Bad hearts, indeed, we all have, John ; and out of the evil treasure of our hearts, we bring forth evil things, and them only, until God, by his mighty power, changes them ; and renews our wicked natures after the likeness of our meek and compassionate Saviour.

“ But do you think that it was to the cruelty of those two men the sheep owed its sufferings ?”

“ To be sure, Aunt, was it not ?”

“ I hardly think so ; few people are so hardened, I hope, as to be cruel merely for the sake of putting others to pain : such a cha-



character is horrible indeed, and even among ungodly men is generally detested; but there is another and more common vice, which is exceedingly hateful in the sight of God, and which leads to most of the cruel actions that we witness."

"What is it Aunt?"

"Covetousness. Men love money, and those things that money will buy; and to this they too often sacrifice all feelings of generosity, compassion, and justice. The owner of a poor sheep may have no wish to see the animal suffer pain: but he is resolved not to lose any part of its value, and therefore, whatever may be the fatigue, sickness, and agony that it endures on the road, it must be made to reach the cattle market in time to be bought for the slaughter. If a drover is employed to drive the flock, he knows his master will make no allowance on the score of humanity, should they arrive there too late; and therefore he employs every means, no matter how cruel, to urge the weary animals along the road, and to prevent the loss of any amongst them. By



long custom the heart and feelings get so hardened, that it is scarcely to be believed what horrible cruelties are practiced on the creatures that God has given us permission to slay for food, but which he never authorized us to torment in any way. Indeed the Scripture describes cruelty as being contrary to all that God approves; and covetousness is called idolatry, because it steals the heart from God, and leads us to break his laws, and to despise his love."

"But the man who took away the sheep, Aunt, was not he cruel?"

"Certainly. He might either have allowed it a few minutes to expire, or have put an end to its sufferings before he flung it across the horse: but that man's heart was too probably also set on his gains, and he had no time nor pity to spare for a poor sheep. He did not know, or would not consider that God takes thought for the meanest creature in existence; and that to him he must surely render an account of the use which he made of the power lent to him over the brute creation. We must not be too hasty in judging



our fellow sinners ; but when we see an instance of wanton cruelty, we may naturally doubt whether the love of God is shed abroad in that person's heart by the Holy Ghost, and we ought to pray for him as for one in danger of receiving judgment without mercy, since he shows no mercy."

"Then, Aunt, if I would never be cruel, I must pray to be kept from covetousness."

"You must, my dear boy ; and you must also pray and strive against every species of self-indulgence. Gluttony is another hateful root of cruelty. To pamper our appetites we torture God's creatures in a frightful manner. You little think, and I will not shock your feelings by telling you, what agonies are inflicted on the harmless beasts, birds, and fishes, in order that men may indulge their appetites. Well may the whole creation be said to groan and travail in pain together : well may they be represented as longing for the time which we are taught to pray for—the coming of God's kingdom—the filling of the earth with his knowledge and glory—the blessed days when none shall



hurt nor destroy! Self-denial is an important part of the Christian character: he who indulges himself, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, must needs be cruel to others. Expending on himself what he possesses, how can he have to give to him that needeth? he must be cruel to the poor; and not only so, but he must be cruel to the souls of those who are perishing in heathen darkness, and who need the help of our money, as well as our prayers and efforts to place the Gospel within their reach. When on the Sabbath day, I see persons using their carriages and horses without necessity, I ask, are they not cruel to their servants, who are thus burdened with unnecessary work, and perhaps kept from the worship of God by such means? to say nothing of the cattle for whom God has appointed it a day of rest, no less than for men. When I witness a love of fine clothes and splendid furniture, I again fear that the claims of humanity are little regarded; and that much wrong is also done to those whose means are less abundant, by giving them an example of



extravagance. We are told that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven : and even what I have now been saying may shew you, my child, how difficult it is to be rich without being covetous ; how impossible to desire and to love riches, without being cruel. Do you not perceive that your resolution must all be vain on this point, unless it pleases God to create in you a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within you, that you may seek first His kingdom and righteousness, and receive from above the heavenly wisdom that will preserve you from the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil ?”

“ Yes, Aunt, I do ; and I will remember what you have said, when I see a poor sheep, or any creature cruelly treated. I did not think it was so difficult to avoid being cruel, when one does not love cruelty.”

“ I am glad the poor sheep has given you a lesson, John : but we may gather farther instruction from what we saw to-day. Do you not remember who is called the Good Shepherd ?”



“ Oh yes ! it is the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“ True ; He does not drive his sheep to a slaughter-house, but to fresh pastures of peace and safety. He does not torment and forsake his charge, but gathers them in his arms, and carries them in his bosom. He does not sell them to another master, but giveth His own life for them, that they may be for ever his. Yet, alas ! how often do we see those whom His tender voice continually invites to follow Him, preferring the thorny ways of this evil world, and going on in sin ; until, wounded unto death, their souls become the prey of a cruel enemy, and their dying eyes are vainly turned to the footsteps of the flock who are following their Shepherd to eternal rest and glory. That is an awful expression in the Psalm, “ They lie in hell like sheep.” Like the cruel rich man, they, being in torments, may lift up their eyes and see the despised people of God in all the blessedness of heaven, while the great gulph, fixed between, renders it impossible that they should ever approach that happy place, or escape from the anguish of devouring flames,



and everlasting burnings. Oh! my child, think that in every step, every moment of your life, you are either following the Good Shepherd, or wandering away from Him; think what will be the end of these things. You may be as suddenly cut off as the poor sheep that we saw to-day: and who shall rescue you from the power of Satan, if you have hardened your heart, and resisted the Lord Jesus Christ, till he was provoked to leave you to yourself?"

If Jesus be my Shepherd here,  
And guard me on the way;  
If Him alone I love and fear,  
And only Him obey,  
How peacefully my steps may go,  
While journeying on my path below.

If Jesus be my shepherd still,  
When the last hour shall come,  
The stroke that doth my body kill  
Will bear my spirit home.  
Death cannot make my soul afraid,  
If Jesus light me through the shade.

And when delivered from the tomb,  
By Jesus led, I go



To where his own rich pastures bloom,  
And living waters flow,  
Oh ! how shall I delight to see  
The Shepherd-King who died for me !

No prowling wolf can enter there,  
Where His redeemed dwell,  
To sin, and death, and pain and care,  
I shall have bid farewell :  
And through eternity abide,  
Rejoicing, by my Shepherd's side.



THE  
**FORTUNE-TELLER.**

THE Gipsy woman\* was dressed in a short jacket of dark blue cloth, the skirts of which hung down a little way over a petticoat of strange patchwork. Stuffs of all colours seemed to have been used to mend and piece out the old dirty dark green that still remained. Her hat was of black beaver, very much the worse for wear, and it was tied under her chin with a red cotton handkerchief. Fastened to her back, in a sort of bag, she carried a little child, whose bright black eyes

\* The Gipsies are a wandering people: they are found in various parts of England and Scotland: they are, in their countenance, character, and habits, a distinct people.



shone out like jet from beneath its tangled hair. Its face was dirty, even more so than its mother's, and so sunburnt that it seemed never to have known the comfort of shade.

Besides her baby, the Gipsy woman carried a wallet slung over one shoulder, and hanging at her side; and a tattered apron was gathered up, and knotted into the piece of cord that served her for a belt. Altogether, there was something so remarkable in their appearance, that little Jessey, who was running before her Mamma, in the shady green lane, stopped to look with surprise at the Gipsy woman; and then, rather frightened by the bold look of her piercing eyes she turned back, and ran to her Mamma taking hold of her hand, and keeping close beside her.

The Gipsy passed them, making a low curtsy to the lady, but not speaking a word; and Jessy looked round to observe the baby, for it had laughed and crowed when it saw her.

"I thought she had been a beggar-woman, Mamma," said Jessy, "but she did not ask



for any thing. How black her eyes are, and the baby's too !”

“ They are Gipsies, my dear,” said Mrs. Howes, “ and Gipsies do not often beg ; but I am sorry to say that they often cheat, and steal, and do many other bad things.”

“ Where do they live, Mamma ?”

“ They are wanderers over the earth, having no settled home, Jessy. They are found in most countries, and are very nearly the same every where. It is not known exactly from whence they came ; but they are generally supposed to be what their name expresses, Egyptians. It was foretold by the prophets that the mighty Egyptians should become the basest of all people ; and that they should be scattered among all nations. We here see the threat of the Lord against them as exactly fulfilled as that against the Jews.”

“ Oh, Mamma !” exclaimed Jessy, “ tell me more about them. I am so sorry for the Jews, because God loved them very much once, and now He is so very angry with them. It is a terrible thing to have God angry with us, Mamma !”



“ A terrible thing indeed, my love ! and you know the Bible says, ‘ God is angry with the wicked every day ;’ and all are wicked in God’s sight who do not believe in his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, and pray continually to have their sins washed away in his most precious blood.”

“ Do the Gipsies believe in the Lord Jesus, Mamma ?”

“ Oh ! no, my dear, they have no religion at all, even in name : they are the most ignorant and wretched people among us. Knowing nothing themselves, they cannot instruct their children ; but they bring them up in idleness and vice, to lie and swear, steal and defraud—to impose on the charitable, and deceive the unwary. It is a great pity that some among us, who love to do good, do not take particular pains to find out and instruct those wretched outcasts of society. God would bless such a work : for He has commanded his servants to look even among the highways and hedges for sinners, who will be accepted if they come to Him, and admitted to sit down at his table.”

Mrs. Howes and her little girl had by this



time nearly reached the house, through a field which led to the back gate, and there, the first thing that they saw was the Gipsy, standing at the kitchen window, and two of the maid servants very busily talking to her. Seeing their mistress, however, they quickly ran away, and left the Gipsy to answer for herself.

She was a little confused at first, but her face soon became as bold as ever, and, in a fawning tone of voice, she said she was sure the good lady would not be offended at her having begged a little stale milk for her poor child, which was very thirsty.

Mrs. Howes asked if she had got any—no, she replied, the maid would not give it without leave.

Mrs. Howes called a boy who was at work, and ordered him to bring a bowl of fresh milk, of which the poor little baby drank heartily; and it was then filled again for the mother.

“And now,” said Mrs. Howes, “whether you spoke truth in telling me that this draught of milk was what you asked of the maids, is known to your conscience. It is



also known to God, whose eyes are in every place, who sees all that you do, hears all that you say, and knows all that you think. I hope you have not spoken falsely; for He will assuredly put the lying lip to silence; and I hope you came here with no wicked intention, for He knows the things that come into your mind, every one of them, and will punish the thought of a wicked heart."

The Gipsy said she would not for the world be a sinner. "You are one," replied the lady, "and so are all; but remember this—Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and, though you should be the chief of them, He both can and will save you, if you come to Him for pardon."

Mrs. Howes ordered the boy to see that the Gipsy left the place, and then went to speak to the servants, and to caution them against suffering such people to loiter near the house.

When Jessy saw her sister Caroline, and the young lady who was on a visit to them, she told all about the Gipsy, and described the poor little baby, as it was carried on its mother's back.



"'Tis the same woman," said Caroline to her friend. Her Mamma asked her what she meant, and Caroline replied that, when walking in the early part of the morning, she and Miss Wilkins had met this woman, who tried very hard to persuade them to have their fortunes told.

"And did you ask her to tell your fortune?" said Jessy.

"No, Jessy: I knew Mamma would not approve of it; and, therefore, I refused to listen to, or to stay near her."

"And I was disappointed," said Miss Wilkins; "for I have often wished to meet a *real* Gipsey, who could tell fortunes, and this seemed to be one."

"Do you mean a real Gipsey, or a real fortune-teller?" asked Mrs. Howes.

"Why, both, Ma'am."

"I am surprised, my dear, to hear a young lady, so well instructed as you have been, speak as if she believed a poor, ignorant creature like this capable of foretelling future events: a thing which the wisest of men would not presume to do."

"I do not exactly believe it, Ma'am. I



wanted to find out if she could, and it might do no harm."

"A very great deal of harm, my dear,—a great sin, as well as folly—a great injury to yourself and your fellow-creatures, and an exceeding great insult against God."

"Let us hear all about it, if you please, Mamma," said Jessy, rubbing her little hands, and setting herself on the sofa; for Jessy dearly loved to listen to her mother's instructions.

Miss Wilkins said, "I know that many sensible people entirely disbelieve in these things; but does not the Bible tell us of them? The witch of Endor, for instance."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Howes; "and the Bible most positively forbids the holding of any communication with them. Witchcraft, as it existed in early times, was punished with death; and the Lord's most severe displeasure was denounced against such as sought unto those who had familiar spirits: so that, even if you can believe these wretched impostors in our days to possess any extraordinary power, you see it is a dreadful sin to listen to them."



“But suppose we do not at all believe it. Ma'am; and only amuse ourselves with their folly.”

“Their folly, my dear, is very great sin; for it begins in a lie, and fearfully insults the Most High God—assuming either that He is not the sole and supreme Ruler of the world, or else that He cannot hide his designs and counsels from the impious worms of earth; or that He is pleased to hold converse with, and to communicate the knowledge of his purposes to, the most notoriously wicked and profane of persons—such as lie under His wrath, and blaspheme him daily with their lips and in their lives. And this applies to all the idle methods practised by superstitious people, to find out what shall occur to them. It is terrible to jest with the fore-knowledge of the omnipotent God.”

“But, Ma'am,” said Miss Wilkins, “I have heard very extraordinary things, proving how much these fortune-tellers know of the concerns of people whom they never saw before.”

“Very probable,” answered Mrs. Howes, “for, without seeing them, they could learn



from servants and neighbours quite enough to enable them to give a good guess at many particulars. This Gipsy might have found out, with little trouble, from my simple maid servants, as much as might have enabled her to astonish us all with her wonderful knowledge of past events, and to gain attention to her pretended predictions. By listening to her, and of course paying her for this information, we should at once reward a lying lip, and encourage the unhappy creature to farther deceits. If the slightest supposition that she might be speaking truth entered our minds, we should be guilty of the sin of witchcraft. If we only amused ourselves with her ignorant pretensions to utter prophecies, we must be numbered among the 'fools' who 'make a mock at sin;' and such fools are held in abomination before God. Besides, if we, who are supposed to understand our duty, set the example of listening to her for our own senseless diversion, servants and poor people will think themselves right in following it; and they will do so with superstitious belief, regarding her as one who has 'familiar spirits.' They will



also be persuaded to squander their earnings in a way most ruinous to their own happiness, for these artful people take care to foretel, in general, great riches and worldly honours to their hearers; and many a simple girl is led by them to leave the path of humble industry, and fix her hopes on something which will never come to pass, but in the expectation of which she may fall into destruction.

“If you had held out your hand to that Gipsy woman, my dear young friend, or listened to her deceitful language, you would have made yourself answerable before God for more sin than you can easily imagine. Every poor creature around us, who should have been robbed, deceived, or puffed up with proud and mischievous conceits by her, might justly accuse you of setting the example, and charge upon you the injury sustained, both here and hereafter.”

“No one would have seen me,” observed Miss Wilkins.

“Perhaps not; but would the woman have neglected to boast that a young person of education, and of the better class of society,



had acknowledged her claims to witchcraft? She knows too well the force of example, to let such a circumstance pass by untold. And even were it otherwise, how could you answer to God for the gross insult offered to his divine majesty and wisdom, in permitting a wretched creature like this to claim His awful attributes, and to boast of searching into those 'secret things which belong unto the Lord our God,' and to him alone? Reflect, my dear, upon these solemn words, and judge whether, without dreadful sin, you could lend your ear to so blasphemous a deceiver."

"Mamma," said Caroline, "how does it happen that these people so often discover thefts, and restore lost goods, by directing the losers where to find them?"

"I do not think that it occurs so frequently as you seem to imagine: but greater wonders are performed every day by the Police, and by the same means—active inquiry, carried on with secrecy and perseverance. Besides, it is too often found that the supposed witch is an accomplice in the theft; or has, by ter-



rifing the superstitious mind of the suspected criminal, extorted a confession.

“ ‘ Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,’ my children ; but commit yourselves wholly unto Him who is willing to make all things work together for good to you ; and to bless your going out and your coming in from this time forth, even for evermore.”

Take thou no thought, O child of dust,  
For what to-morrow's dawn may bring ;  
But in the Lord thy Saviour trust,  
And bide beneath his guardian wing.

Thy times are in His hand alone,  
That hand which deals thy daily bread ;  
To him the coming hour is known,  
That lays thee with the silent dead.

Would'st thou, a worm of earth, explore  
His counsels, hid from angel eyes ?  
Indulge the impious wish no more,  
Nor tempt thy God—“ God only wise.”

Enough, if through life's path to heaven,  
He deign to guide thy devious way ;  
Enough, that grace and strength be given,  
Sufficient for the passing day.



## WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

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NOTHING can be more simple or more common than the question, "Where are you going?" yet, if rightly considered, it is a very startling inquiry; and should excite much serious thought in him to whom it is addressed. Whatever more immediate object he may have in view, whether he be preparing for a long journey or a short excursion, walking into the garden, the next field, the next house, or the next room: or whether he remain stationary, still one reply may be rightly given by all—old and young, rich and poor, all, without exception, can answer, "I am going to the grave: from thence I am going to judgment: and from the judgment-seat I am going either to heaven or to hell."



“ I see you are putting on your holiday clothes, and by your looks I judge that you have a great deal of pleasure in prospect : pray where are you going ? ” “ I am going to the grave. ” How strange would such an answer sound in the ears of a thoughtless companion ! but is it not far more strange that it should so rarely occur, seeing that it is the simple and obvious truth ? If a man was informed that an immense property had been left to him, and you met him travelling towards the spot, it would appear quite natural that he should answer your question with the joyful intelligence, “ I am on my way to take possession of a valuable estate. ” If you met a wretched criminal approaching the place of execution, would not the melancholy reply be expected, “ I am going to suffer the penalty of the laws which I have broken. ” In either case, though some time and distance, and many objects might intervene between either of these persons and the end of his journey, the importance of the event in view would render them inconsiderable in his sight ; and you would see nothing extraordinary in



the replies as given above. Certainly the thoughts of each would be most intently fixed on that end: and little interest would be excited by any passing event on the road, that did not refer to it.

Compare the anxiety of these people with the almost universal indifference that you behold among those around you, every one of whom is really and certainly on his way, either to a throne of glory, an eternal inheritance of blessedness, or to a state of everlasting misery and despair. Ask them seriously—to which of these places are you going?—and some will wonder at you, others will mock and jest, while the remainder, perhaps, may courteously reply, that they hope they are going to heaven. And what is heaven? The habitation of God: the place where his immediate presence irradiates the throne of his glory: where a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kingdoms, and people, and tongues, stand before that throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and having palms in their hands: where the voice of many angels, even ten thousand, and thousands of



thousands, is continually heard, yielding glory, and praise, and thanksgiving to the Lord God omnipotent: where the unceasing song of happy spirits ascends to the Lamb, saying: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Heaven is a place which cannot be described to suit our darkened understandings; for, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for those that love him." It is a place where the soul shall *see* God, and *serve* him, and *love* him as the angels do. Knowing, as it is known, the glorified spirit will be able to search into the deep treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge: it will associate with the saints, the martyrs, the prophets, and apostles; with all the redeemed from among the sinners of mankind, with all the angels who never sinned, and with Jesus, the Lord of glory. Can it be that, in the midst of daily transgression, defiled with a load of unremoved iniquity, devoted to the world, pampering the flesh, and led captive by the devil; neglecting the Bible, trifling with prayer, seeking the praise of men, and indif-



ferent to the glory of God ; can it be that men will yet continue so utterly blind to their own characters and prospects, as to persuade themselves that the stroke of death will at once translate them to the employments and the delights of heaven ?

I imagine myself walking upon the public road : I meet a man journeying along, poorly clad, and with all his possessions, perhaps, tied up in a bundle, while the dust and fatigue of the way increase the wretchedness of his appearance. I address him, “ My friend, where are you going ? What is to be the end of your travels ? ” He points to a magnificent palace at some distance, “ Do you see that fine house and extensive grounds, prepared for princes to live in ? I am going to claim it for my own, and to dwell there to the end of my days. ” Could I believe him ? Surely not, unless he advanced some strong proof of his assertion. If he has no document to shew, no satisfactory account to give of his title to it, and if, in addition, I see him travelling along a road that does not, cannot lead to the palace, what must I think ? I address him again, “ It appears to me that



the path which you are treading will bring you to a very different spot; there seems to be a great and dangerous pit before you, and to that you are advancing." "It is very true," he replies, "that, as you say, there is such a pit, and also that, if I do not arrive at the palace, I must fall into it and perish without remedy; but do not fear: I am on the right road, and sure of obtaining the inheritance." "What proof can you give of it?" "I am not sufficiently acquainted with the matter to give you a regular proof; but, so long as I am satisfied, what can it signify to you? Do you think that I cannot take care of my own interests?"

Pity for such delusion, and anxiety for the fate of a fellow-creature hasting to destruction, might induce me to detain him yet, and to produce a map of the road, which clearly shewed that the way which he was pursuing would never terminate as he expected; and also, that the claim which he must put in for the inheritance was one with the nature of which he was still totally unacquainted; but if he met my good-will with displeasure, rejected my assistance, refused to examine



my map, and persisted in hastening towards the mouth of the pit, what could I do more than wonder at his perverseness, and lament his inevitable fate?

Now, to drop this metaphor, and speak in plain language, we see many every day who are travelling towards the grave, which must be the gate of eternal life or of eternal death, as ignorant, as obstinate, and as blindly confident as the character that I have been imagining. Such a man will appear busily making his way through life, gathering about him all that he thinks worth possessing, and with every mark of an ungodly world cleaving to him, like the dust of a public road. Ask such a man where he is going when this life is at an end—if he replies at all seriously, he will probably say, to heaven. You may object that such miserable and sinful beings can have far less claim to so rich an inheritance than a beggar has to an earthly throne: and require him to explain by what right he demands so great a prize: the answer will be vague and unsatisfactory—he believes there is a heaven—that it is a place of happiness: he desires to obtain it, when



he quits the present scene—God is merciful, and will not refuse it. You know how vain, such expectations are; and after reminding him that the Scriptures expressly declare the unrighteous shall not inherit that kingdom, you may take pains to shew him that both in his heart and life are many things of a most unrighteous description—many sins, of which the wages is death, and therefore that he is not going towards the heavenly country, but is in the road to perdition. To this he will again reply, that he cannot contradict the truth of what you say, as to the just punishment of sin: but he relies on the mercy of God, whom he is obeying as well as he can: and he trusts that his sincerity will be accepted, and his transgressions pardoned. He is a sinner, he owns; but who is not? if none but perfect people get to heaven, certainly none of his acquaintance will go there; and many much better than himself will likewise perish. He cannot think so harshly of a merciful Creator, he tells you; and as he means to repent of his sins, and to do the best he can, why should he doubt of going to heaven at the last?



But, you may say, he confesses himself and all mankind to be sinners; he also allows that God has threatened the severest punishment to such: and you ask him again what excuse he can find when called to account for every transgression? What plea can he put in for the prize of eternal glory, when he acknowledges himself in danger of endless misery by having sinned? As to the condition of others, you remind him, that has nothing to do with his case. Each must be judged alone, and we never heard of one criminal being pardoned because the calendar of offences was particularly heavy; neither can punishment be more tolerable to one guilty creature, because another, perhaps less wicked, suffers with him. How much less then shall the multitude of the condemned lessen the rage of the devouring flame, or appease the anguish of their everlasting burnings! Besides, your companion will not deny that perfection is inseparable from the divine character in all its parts. God is perfectly merciful, but then he is not less perfectly just, holy, and true; and while his perfect justice demands the punishment



of sin, and his perfect holiness makes it unspeakably hateful to him, his perfect truth is pledged to execute vengeance against it. A mercy such as the careless sinner expects, could only be exercised at the expense of other and equal perfections; which is impossible, because then God would cease to be perfect. How, then, shall he dare to ask for heaven, while defiled with the abominable thing which God hates—sin?

To solve these difficulties is beyond the power of the person to whom you talk: he will plead that these deep things belong to the clergy, and such as can make them their study—that for his part he shall not attempt to answer you. Contented to feel assured that he has done nothing bad enough to deserve hell; and, depending on the mercy which he is taught to ask for final happiness, perhaps he will add, that a man may be a very good practical Christian without understanding any thing of these doctrines; and that while you go to heaven your way, he begs you will let him proceed quietly in his, never doubting that both may be right, and that, though not travelling on the same road,



you shall meet at the same joyful home at last.

From reasoning like this, you appeal “to the law and the testimony.” They concur in pointing out one, and only one path of safety for the children of men—that one is obedience. The law shews a number of strict commandments, and requiring a perfect fulfilment of every one, says, “this do, and ye shall live.” But guilty, helpless man, has no power to do this,—no; not to keep one of the least of them, as God requires them to be kept; therefore, a better covenant is given, even the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, who declares, “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” We are required to obey the truth which he teaches; and are told that the Lord Jesus “shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This “obedience of faith” is distinct from the works of the law. It is a believing in the efficacy of that perfect obedience wrought



out by our Lord Jesus Christ, to satisfy the holiness of God, even as the mighty sacrifice of Himself in our stead appeased the justice of God; and the chastisement inflicted on Him, our surety and representative, vindicated the truth of God, by fulfilling the threats of divine indignation on the sinless One, who was made "sin for us," "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Great is the mystery of godliness!" The mind of man is too dark to comprehend, and the heart of man is too hard to receive the impression of these truths, the knowledge of which can alone bring salvation. A work must be wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, so great and so important as to deserve the appellation of a new birth. Without it, God expressly declares, a man cannot see His kingdom. For the Holy Spirit we are commanded to ask, to seek, to knock, in persevering prayer; to wait, to watch, to study, to meditate on the word of salvation. We are assured there is but one road, however we may flatter ourselves with the hope of finding many: and how emphatic is the warning! "Enter ye in at the strait



gate ; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat : because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Here is the stumbling-block : it is much easier, much more agreeable to the indolence of the carnal mind, to go on in the beaten track, and delude itself with shadowy hopes of everlasting life, while treading the way that leads to death, than to press through an entrance so strait as to exclude many things dear as a right eye ; and to toil along a steep and rugged path, as the enemy of our souls represents that to be, which the Scripture describes as the way of pleasantness, and the path of peace. Repelled by the narrowness of the road, and the few who have chosen it, the sinner refuses to believe that it is the only way to heaven ; and while, perhaps, he keeps the heavenly mansions in view, he is not, cannot be approaching them, but hastens to the gulf that is gaping to swallow him up. He does not like to hear of such things as we have recorded, because we refer



him to the Bible, where he will be sure to find them set forth with every confirmation, sealed with the immutable promise and oath of God, and leaving him without excuse. Then, he must either reject the Scriptures, or acknowledge that he is in the way to destruction. If he owns this, out of his own mouth he is already condemned, unless he will come to Christ, that he may have life. This coming to Christ includes a renunciation of self, and of the world, and lays upon him a yoke and a burden. He will not believe how glorious is the liberty which he would gain when self and the world were cast off; nor how light and easy are that yoke and burden, that law of love, given in lieu of the condemning law to which he ignorantly cleaves. He will neither take God's word, nor credit the assurance of those who have entered upon the safe path; but clothes in imaginary terrors the lovely form of Christianity, and permits Satan to draw a veil over the consuming fury of the unappeased wrath of God. Probably he turns in anger from your remonstrances, and affectionate



representations; or, at best, he listens but for a moment, and then driving the unwelcome theme from his thoughts, he hastens onward in the fatal path of error, to the issue of death. To the rejection, neglect, or abuse of the Holy Scriptures, may be traced whatsoever of false doctrine, inconsistency, and evil practices, is permitted to defile the professing Church of Christ, Roman Catholic teachers, conscious that their dark and idolatrous system cannot endure the test of that searching light, withhold it altogether from their deluded flocks: and to this we may safely appeal as a conclusive proof that their church has fallen away from the truth of the Gospel. What we thus assert of Roman Catholics, as a body, may with too much justice be applied to a vast number of Protestants, in their individual characters. Wherever the Bible is undervalued, there is Christ rejected, and God mocked. Is it not mockery the most insulting, practically to accuse Him of bestowing on his creatures as rich treasure a worthless gift?—of commanding them on pain of his eternal displea-



sure to make that their constant study, which may be safely thrown aside and forgotten? Were the Lord Jesus again to descend from heaven, and audibly repeat to us the injunction, "Search the Scriptures," we should hardly presume to disobey. Yet we know with absolute certainty that He has addressed those words to others, and through them to us, confirming under the new dispensation the command given to Israel, "Lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes, and ye shall teach them to your children," &c. Deut. xi. 18—20.

It has been well remarked, that if reading the Bible does not compel a man to leave off sinning, sin will soon induce him to leave off reading the Bible. It is impossible that any one who really makes God's word his study should rest satisfied in an evil way: not that the mere perusal of that holy Book can change the natural heart, or divest sin of its hateful character. There are some who consider it their duty to read, either alone or in



their families, a portion of the Scriptures daily; some weekly, or at other periods; but who never appear to make a personal application of what is read to their own state, or reduce to practice its spiritual precepts. Such read either without prayer for divine teaching, or they pray, as they read, in mere formality; or else they daringly harden their hearts, and continue in sin because they know that grace abounds. Others again, really shape the course of their lives according to the commandments which they conceive God will have fulfilled; but while claiming a vast deal of merit in this limited obedience, they do not reflect that out of the heart proceed those things which God hates, that pride is deeply offensive to Him, and that spiritual pride is of all others the most presumptuous: that the very thought of foolishness is sin, and a duty neglected is, in God's sight, a crime committed. These people lay much stress in general on the Twentieth chapter of Exodus: but shrink from the 5th, 6th, and 7th of St. Matthew's Gospel, and from St John's first Epistle.



In all these cases there is an error deep and fatal. They "add to" the word of God, by promising themselves as a recompence for their outward observance what He has nowhere promised, otherwise than as a free gift bestowed through Christ, and to be sought by faith, not by works. They "take from" His word, by overlooking those innumerable declarations that represent Jesus Christ as the sinner's only hope, the sole way by which he may attain everlasting life. They expect to flourish as branches of the true Vine, without being supplied by the root: they seem to expect that such a homage as the heathen pay to their idols will satisfy Him who says, "Give me thy heart," and, having closed the book, they experience a similar false confidence. To such we would say, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," and earnestly exhort them to seek that wisdom which cometh from above, and which, if humbly asked, will doubtless be given: but with regard to those who read the Bible with a real understanding of its spiritual meaning, and yet allow themselves



in sinful thoughts or practices, it is most certain that they cannot persevere in so doing without inflicting on themselves unspeakable anguish. How can they bear to look upon that which shews the glories of the offered inheritance, the horrors of the bottomless abyss ; which points out with a clearness that cannot be misunderstood, the road leading to the former, and marks in characters of fire their every deviation into the innumerable crooked paths whose termination is in the latter. Like the voice of the Lord God in the garden, startling guilty Adam with the question, "Where art thou?" comes the secret and appalling inquiry, "Whither goest thou?" from every page of the Bible, and with it the fearful addition, "The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Reader,—“Where are you going?” Of this be assured, that you are not standing still ; and if you shrink from looking fixedly into the map of God’s word ; if you study not to shape your course by it, and to become a diligent traveller on the way which it points out, you have need to tremble : for



the pit is before you, and darkness is around: and once falling, you fall for ever. Again, if, in seeking the heavenly inheritance, you rest a hope, a thought on any other title than the dying legacy of the Saviour, who purchased it with his precious blood, as a free gift to all who believe; if you prove not by obedience to His laws your faith in Him, treading in the blessed steps of His most holy life to the mansion that he has prepared, you may find, too late, that a road can lay very near his kingdom, and yet not lead to it. We are told of such in the Scriptures, and warned by them: Felix trembled; Herod did many things gladly; Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian; Simon Magus was baptized, and followed the apostles. Therefore, be not high-minded, but fear. That is not a saving faith, which does not produce good works: those works are utterly rejected that do not spring from faith. The object, the author, the finisher of our faith, is Jesus Christ; who is the way, and the truth, and the life. Look unto Him and be saved: look to Him with filial



confidence, and receive Him as set forth to be the propitiation for your sins, and an example of godly life, as well as the root from whence you must derive all spiritual nourishment—all power to please God.

Reader, may it be thus with you! and you will have no cause to fear, though every rising morning and every closing night, mutely reminding you how rapid and how irrevocable is the march of time, breathe to your soul the impressive question,—“WHERE ARE YOU GOING?”

THE END.



















Charlotte Elizabeth,

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